



MR. GRAY.





MR. GRAY.

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THE  
P O E M S  
OF

Mr. G R A Y. (T)

TO WHICH ARE PREFIXED  
M E M O I R S  
OF HIS  
L I F E   A N D   W R I T I N G S  
B Y

W. M A S O N, M.A.

V O L. I.

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D U B L I N:  
PRINTED FOR D. CHAMBERLAINE, J. POTTS,  
J. WILLIAMS, W. COLLES, W. WILSON,  
R. MONCRIEFFE, T. WALKER, G. BURNET,  
C. JENKIN, J. COLLES, AND  
M. MILLS.

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M D C C L X X V.

TO WHICH ARE PREFIXED



PRINTED FOR D. GRAMBERG, 1, PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON.  
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M. LILLIS.

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MEMOIRS

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# MEMOIRS

OF THE

LIFE AND WRITINGS

OF

Mr. G R A Y.

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## SECTION THE FIRST.

**T**HE lives of men of letters seldom abound with incidents; and perhaps no life ever afforded fewer than that which I have undertaken to write. But I am far from mentioning this by way of previous apology, as is the trite custom of biographers. The respect which I owe to my deceased friend, to the public, (and let me add) to myself, prompts me to waive so impertinent a ceremonial. A reader of sense and taste never expects to find in the memoirs of a Philosopher, or a Poet, the same species of entertainment, or information, which he would receive from those of a Statesman or General: He expects, however, to be either informed or entertained: Nor would he be disappointed, did the writer take care to dwell principally on such topics as characterize the man, and distinguish that peculiar part which he

VOL. I. A acted

acted in the varied Drama of Society. But this rule, self-evidently right as it may seem, is seldom observed. It was said with almost as much truth as wit, of one of these writers, that when he composed the life of Lord Verulam, he forgot that he was a Philosopher; and therefore, it was to be feared, should he finish that of the Duke of Marlborough, he would forget that he was a General. I shall avoid a like fault. I will promise my reader that he shall, in the following pages, seldom behold Mr. Gray in any other light than that of a Scholar and a Poet: And though I am more solicitous to shew that he was a virtuous, a friendly, and an amiable man, than either; yet this solicitude becomes unnecessary from the very papers which he has bequeathed me, and which I here arrange for the purpose: Since in these the qualities of his head and heart so constantly appear together, and the fertility of his fancy so intimately unites with the sympathetic tenderness of his soul, that were it in my intention, I should find it impossible to disjoin them.

His parents were reputable citizens of London. His grandfather a considerable merchant: But his father, Mr. Philip Gray, though he also followed business, was of an indolent and reserved temper; and therefore rather diminished than increased his paternal fortune. He had many children, of whom Thomas, the subject of these memoirs, was the fifth born. All of them, except him, died in their infancy; and I have been told that he narrowly escaped suffocation, (owing to too great a fulness of blood which destroyed the rest) and would certainly have been cut off as early, had not his mother, with a courage remarkable for one of her sex, and withal so very tender a parent, ventured to open a vein with her own hand, which instantly removed the paroxysm.

He

He was born in Cornhill, December the 26th, 1716; was educated at Eton school, under the care of Mr. Antrobus, his mother's brother, who was at that time one of the assistant masters. From thence he removed to St. Peter's College, Cambridge, where he was admitted a pensioner in the year 1734. While at school he contracted a friendship with Mr. Horace Walpole and Mr. Richard West: The former of these appears, at present, with too much distinction in the literary, as well as fashionable world, to make it necessary I should enlarge upon his subject: But as the latter died before he could exert his uncommon abilities, it seems necessary to premise somewhat concerning him; especially as almost every anecdote which I have to produce, concerning the juvenile part of Mr. Gray's life, is included in his correspondence with this gentleman. A correspondence which continued, with very little interruption, for the space of about eight years, from the time of their leaving school to the death of the accomplished youth in question.

His father was Lord Chancellor of Ireland. His grandfather, by the mother, the famous Bishop Burnet. He removed from Eton to Oxford, about the same time that Mr. Gray left that place for Cambridge. Each of them carried with him the reputation of an excellent classic scholar; though I have been told that, at the time, Mr. West's genius was reckoned the more brilliant of the two: A judgment which, I conceive, was not well founded; for though Mr. West's part of that correspondence, which I shall speedily give the reader,\* will undoubtedly shew

A 2

that

\* I am well aware that I am here going to do a thing which the cautious and courtly Dr. Sprat (were he now alive) would highly censure. He had, it seems, a large collection



that he possess very extraordinary talents, yet, on Mr. Gray's side, there seems superadded to these, such a manly precision of taste, and maturity of judgment, as would induce one to believe Mr. Walpole's phrase not very hyperbolical, who has often asserted to me that, "Gray never was a Boy."

In April, 1738, Mr. West left Christ Church for the Inner Temple, and Mr. Gray removed from Peter-House to Town the latter end of that year; intending also to apply himself to the study of the Law in the same society: For which purpose his father had already either hired or bought him a set of chambers. But on an invitation which Mr. Walpole gave him to be his companion in his travels, this intention was laid aside for the present, and never after put in execution.

lection of his friend Mr. Cowley's letters, "a way of writing" in which he peculiarly excelled, as in these he always expressed the native tenderness and innocent gaiety of his heart; "yet the Doctor was of opinion that nothing of this nature should be published, and that the letters that pass between particular friends (if they are written as they ought to be) can scarce ever be fit to see the light." What! not when they express the native tenderness and innocent gaiety of a heart like Mr. Cowley's? No, by no means, "for in such letters the souls of men appear undrest, and in that negligent habit they may be fit to be seen by one or two in a chamber, but not to go abroad in the street." *See Life of Cowley, page 38, Hurd's Edition.*

Such readers as believe it incumbent on every well-bred soul never to appear but in full dress, will think that Dr. Sprat has reason on his side; but I suspect that the generality will, notwithstanding, wish he had been less scrupulously delicate, and lament that the letters in question are not now extant. Of one thing I am fully confident that, had this been the case, the judicious Dr. Hurd would have found his critical labour much lessened, when, in pure charity to this amiable writer, he lately employed himself in separating

His pleasing moral from his pointed wit.

According

According to the plan which I have formed for arranging these papers, a part of the letters which I have already mentioned will here find their proper place. They will give a much clearer idea both of Mr. Gray and his friend, at this early period, than any narrative of mine. They will include also several specimens of their juvenile compositions, and, at the same time, mark the progress they had made in literature. They will ascertain, not only the scope and turn of their genius, but of their temper. In a word, Mr. Gray will become his own biographer, both in this and the rest of the sections into which I divide this work. By which means, and by the assistance of a few notes which I shall occasionally add, it may be hoped that nothing will be omitted which may tend to give a regular and clear delineation of his life and character.

But as this is the earliest part of their correspondence, and includes only the time which passed between Mr. Gray's admission into the university and his going abroad, it may be reasonably expected that the manner rather than the matter of these letters must constitute their principal merit; they will therefore be chiefly acceptable to such ingenuous youths, who being about the same age, have a relish for the same studies, and bosoms susceptible of the same warmth of friendship. To these I address them; in the pleasing hope that they may prompt them to emulate their elegant simplicity, and, of course, to study with more care the classic models from which it was derived. If they do this, I shall not be much concerned if graver readers think them unimportant or even trifling.

## L E T T E R I.

Mr. WEST to Mr. GRAY.

YOU use me very cruelly : you have sent me but one letter since I have been at Oxford, and that too agreeable not to make me sensible how great my loss is in not having more. Next to seeing you is the pleasure of seeing your hand-writing ; next to hearing you is the pleasure of hearing from you. Really and sincerely I wonder at you, that you thought it not worth while to answer my last letter. I hope this will have better success in behalf of your quondam school-fellow ; in behalf of one who has walked hand in hand with you, like the two children in the wood,

Through many a flowery path and shelly grot,  
Where learning lull'd us in her private \* maze.

The very thought, you see, tips my pen with poetry, and brings Eton to my view. Consider me very seriously here in a strange country, inhabited by things that call themselves Doctors and Masters of Arts ; a country flowing with syllogisms and ale, where Horace and Virgil are equally unknown ; consider me, I say, in this melancholy light, and then think if something be not due to                      Your's.

*Christ Church, Nov. 14, 1735.*

P. S. I desire you will send me soon, and truly and positively, † a history of your own time.

\* This expression prettily distinguishes their studies when out of the public school, which would naturally, at their age, be vague and desultory.

† Alluding to his grandfather's history.

## LETTER II.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WEST.

**P**ERMIT me again to write to you, though I have so long neglected my duty, and forgive my brevity, when I tell you it is occasioned wholly by the hurry I am in to get to a place where I expect to meet with no other pleasure than the sight of you ; for I am preparing for London in a few days at furthest. I do not wonder in the least at your frequent blaming my indolence, it ought rather to be called ingratitude, and I am obliged to your goodness for softening so harsh an appellation. When we meet it will, however, be my greatest of pleasures to know what you do, what you read, and how you spend your time, &c. &c. and to tell you what I do not read, and how I do not, &c. for almost all the employment of my hours may be best explained by negatives ; take my word and experience upon it, doing nothing is a most amusing business ; and yet neither something nor nothing gives me any pleasure. When you have seen one of my days, you have seen a whole year of my life ; they go round and round like the blind horse in the mill, only he has the satisfaction of fancying he makes a progress, and gets some ground ; my eyes are open enough to see the same dull prospect, and to know that having made four-and-twenty steps more, I shall be just where I was ; I may, better than most people, say my life is but a span, were I not afraid lest you should not believe that a person so short-lived could write even so long a letter as this ; in short, I believe I must not send you the history of my own time, till



I can also send you that of the reformation.\* However, as the most undeserving people in the world must sure have the vanity to wish somebody had a regard for them, so I need not wonder at my own, in being pleased that you care about me. You need not doubt, therefore, of having a first row in the front box of my little heart, and I believe you are not in danger of being crouded there; it is asking you to an old play, indeed, but you will be candid enough to excuse the whole piece for the sake of a few tolerable lines.

For this little while past I have been playing with Statius; we yetterday had a game at quoits together; you will easily forgive me for having broke his head, as you have a little pique to him. I send you my translation†, which I did not engage in because I liked that part of the Poem, nor do I now send it to you because I think it deserves it, but merely to you how I mispend my days.

Third in the labours of the Disc came on,  
With sturdy step and slow, Hippomedon;  
Artful and strong he pois'd the well-known weight,  
By Phlegyas warn'd, and fir'd by Mnestheus' fate,  
That to avoid, and this to emulate.

\* Carrying on the allusion to the other history written by Mr. West's grandfather.

† This consisted of about 110 lines, which were sent separately, and as I believe it was Mr. Gray's first attempt in English verse, it is a curiosity not to be entirely withheld from the reader; therefore, although it is not my intention to fill these memoirs with much either of his or his correspondent's productions in this way, yet as a few lines will show how much Mr. Gray had imbibed of Dryden's spirited manner, at this early period, I insert at the end of the letter a specimen of the whole.

His

His vigorous arm he try'd before he flung,  
 Brac'd all his nerves, and every sinew strung;  
 Then with a tempest's whirl and wary eye,  
 Pursu'd his cast, and hurl'd the orb on high;  
 The orb on high tenacious of its course,  
 True to the mighty arm that gave it force,  
 Far overleaps all bound, and joys to see  
 Its ancient lord secure of victory.  
 The theatre's green height and woody wall  
 Tremble ere it precipitates its fall,  
 The ponderous mass sinks in the cleaving ground,  
 While vales and woods and echoing hills rebound,  
 As when from Ætna's smoking summit broke,  
 The eyeless Cyclops heav'd the craggy rock;  
 Where Ocean frets beneath the dashing oar;  
 And parting surges round the vessel roar;  
 'Twas there he aim'd the meditated harm,  
 And scarce Ulysses scap'd his giant arm.  
 A tyger's pride the victor bore away,  
 With native spots and artful labour gay,  
 A shining border round the margin roll'd,  
 And calm'd the terrors of his claws in gold.

*Cambridge, May 8, 1736.*

### L E T T E R III.

Mr. WEST to Mr. GRAY.

I Agree with you that you have broke Statius's head, but it is in like manner as Apollo broke Hyacinth's, you have foiled him infinitely at his own weapon; I must insist on seeing the rest of your translation, and then I will examine it entire, and compare it with the Latin, and be very wise and

severe, and put on an inflexible face, such as becomes the character of a true son of Aristarchus, of hyper-critical memory. In the mean while,

And calm'd the terrors of his claws in gold,  
Is exactly Statius—*Summos auro mansueverat  
ungues.* I never knew before that the golden fangs on hammercloths were so old a fashion. Your *Hymenéal* \* I was told was the best in the Cambridge Collection before I saw it, and, indeed, it is no great compliment to tell you I thought it so when I had seen it, but sincerely it pleased me best. Methinks the college bards have run into a strange taste on this occasion. Such soft unmeaning stuff about Venus and Cupid, and Peleus and Thetis, and Zephyrs and Dryads, was never read. As for my poor little Eclogue it has been condemned and beheaded by our Westminster judges; an exordium of about sixteen lines absolutely cut off, and its other limbs quartered in a most barbarous manner. I will send it you in my next as my true and lawful heir, in exclusion of the pretender, who has the impudence, to appear under my name.

As yet I have not looked into Sir Isaac. Public disputations I hate; mathematics I reverence; history, morality, and natural philosophy have the greatest charms in my eye; but who can forget poe-

\* Published in the Cambridge collection of verses on the Prince of Wales's marriage. I have not thought it necessary to insert these hexameters, as adulatory verses of this kind, however well written, deserve not to be transmitted to posterity; and, indeed, are usually buried, as they ought to be, in the trash with which they are surrounded. Every person, who feels himself a poet, ought to be above prostituting his powers on such occasions, and extreme youth (as was the case with Mr. Gray) is the only thing that can apologize for having done it.

try ? they call it idleness, but it is surely the most enchanting thing in the world, “ac dulce otium & pœne omni negotio pulchrius.”

I am, dear Sir, yours while I am  
*Christ Church, May 24, 1736.* R. W.

The following letter seems to require some little preface, not so much because it expresses Mr. Gray's juvenile sentiments concerning the mode of our academical education, as that these sentiments prevailed with him through life, and that he often declared them, with so little reserve, as to create him many enemies. It is certain that at the time when he was admitted, and for some years after, Jacobitism, and its concomitant hard drinking, prevailed still at Cambridge, much to the prejudice not only of good manners but of good letters ; for, if this spirit was then on the decline, it was not extinguished till after the year 1745. But we see (as was natural enough in a young man) he laid the blame rather on the mode of education than the mode of the times ; and to this error, the uncommon proficiency he had made at Eton in classical learning might contribute, as he found himself in a situation where that species of merit held not the first rank. However this be, it was necessary not to omit this feature of his mind, when employed in drawing a general likeness of it, and what colours could be found so forcible as his own to express its true light and shadow ? I would further observe, that whatever truth there might be in his satire at the time it was written, it can by no means affect the present state of the university. There is usually a much greater fluctuation of taste and manners in an academical, than a national body ; occasioned (to use a scholastic metaphor) by that



that very quick succession of its component parts, which often goes near to destroy its personal identity. Whatever therefore may be true of such a society at one time, may be, and generally is, ten years after absolutely false.

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#### L E T T E R IV.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WEST.

**Y**OU must know that I do not take degrees, and after this term, shall have nothing more of college impertinencies to undergo, which I trust will be some pleasure to you, as it is a great one to me. I have endured lectures daily and hourly since I came last, supported by the hopes of being shortly at full liberty to give myself up to my friends and classical companions, who, poor souls! though I see them fallen into great contempt with most people here, yet I cannot help sticking to them, and out of a spirit of obstinacy (I think) love them the better for it; and indeed, what can I do else? Must I plunge into metaphysics? Alas, I cannot see in the dark; nature has not furnished me with the optics of a cat. Must I pore upon mathematics? Alas, I cannot see in too much light; I am no eagle. It is very possible that two and two make four, but I would not give four farthings to demonstrate this ever so clearly; and if these be the profits of life give me the amusements of it. The people I behold all around me, it seems, know all this and more, and yet I do not know one of them who inspires me with any ambition of being like him. Surely it was of this place, now Cambridge, but formerly known by the name of Babylon, that the prophet

prophet spoke when he said, " the wild beasts of  
 " the desert shall dwell there, and their houses shall  
 " be full of doleful creatures, and owls shall build  
 " there, and satyrs shall dance there; their forts  
 " and towers shall be a den for ever, a joy of wild  
 " asses; there shall the great owl make her nest, and  
 " lay and hatch and gather under her shadow; it  
 " shall be a court of dragons; the screech owl also  
 " shall rest there, and find for herself a place of  
 " rest." You see here is a pretty collection of de-  
 solate animals, which is verified in this town to a  
 tittle, and perhaps it may also allude to your habi-  
 tation, for you know all types may be taken by  
 abundance of handles; however, I defy your owls  
 to match mine.

If the default of your spirits and nerves be no-  
 thing but the effect of the hyp, I have no more to  
 say. We all must submit to that wayward Queen,  
 I too in no small degree own her sway,

I feel her influence while I speak her power.

But if it be a real distemper, pray take more care of  
 your health, if not for your own at least for our sakes,  
 and do not be so soon weary of this little world:  
 I do not know what \* refined friendships you may  
 have contracted in the other, but pray do not be in  
 a hurry to see your acquaintance above; among  
 your terrestrial familiars, however, though I say it  
 that should not say it, there positively is not one that  
 has a greater esteem for you than

*Peterhouse, Dec. 1736.* Yours most sincerely, &c.

\* This thought is very juvenile, but perhaps he meant to  
 ridicule the affected manner of Mrs. Rowe's letters of the  
 dead to the living; a book which was, I believe, published  
 about this time.

L E T-

## L E T T E R V.

Mr. WEST to Mr. GRAY.

**I** Congratulate you on your being about to leave college,\* and rejoice much you carry no degrees with you. For I would not have had you dignified, and I not, for the world, you would have insulted me so. My eyes, such as they are, like yours, are neither metaphysical nor mathematical; I have, nevertheless, a great respect for your connoisseurs that way, but am always contented to be their humble admirer. Your collection of desolate animals pleased me much; but Oxford, I can assure you, has her owls that match yours, and the prophecy has certainly a squint that way. Well, you are leaving this dismal land of bondage, and which way are you turning your face? Your friends, indeed, may be happy in you, but what will you do with your classic companions? An inn of court is as horrid a place as a college, and a moot case is as dear to gentle dullness as a syllogism. But wherever you go, let me beg you not to throw poetry "like a nauseous weed away." Cherish its sweets in your bosom, they will serve you now and then to correct the disgusting sober follies of the common law, *misce stultitiam consiliis brevem, dulce est desipere in loco*; so said Horace to Virgil, those two sons of Anac in poetry, and so say I to you, in this degenerate land of pigmies.

\* I suspect that Mr. West mistook his correspondent; who, in saying he did not take degrees, meant only to let his friend know that he should soon be released from lectures and disputations. It is certain that Mr. Gray continued at college near two years after the time he wrote the preceding letter.

Mix with your grave designs a little pleasure,  
Each day of business has its hour of leisure.

In one of these hours I hope, dear sir, you will sometimes think of me, write to me, and know me yours,

Ἐξαίδια, μὴ κεύθε νόον, ἵνα ἔϊδομεν ἄμφοι

that is, write freely to me and openly, as I do to you, and to give you a proof of it I have sent you an elegy \* of Tibullus translated. Tibullus, you must know, is my favourite elegiac poet; for his language is more elegant and his thoughts more natural than Ovid's. Ovid excels him only in wit, of which no poet had more in my opinion. The reason I choose so melancholy a kind of poetry, is because my low spirits and constant ill health (things in me not imaginary, as you surmise, but too real, alas! and, I fear, constitutional) "have tuned my heart to elegies of woe;" and this likewise is the reason why I am the most irregular thing alive at college, for you may depend upon it I value my health above what they call discipline. As for this poor unlicked thing of an elegy, pray criticise it unmercifully, for I send it with that intent. Indeed your late translation of Statius might have deterred me, but I know you are not more able to excel others, than you are apt to forgive the want of excellence, especially when it is found in the productions of

Your most sincere friend.

*Christ Church, Dec. 22, 1736.*

L E T-

\* This I omit for the reason given in a preceding note, and for another also, because it is not written in alternate but heroic rhyme; which I think is not the species of English measure adapted to elegiac poetry.



## L E T T E R - VI.\*

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WALPOLE.

**Y**OU can never weary me with the repetition of any thing that makes me sensible of your Kindness ; since that has been the only idea of any social happiness that I have almost ever received, and which (begging your pardon for thinking so differently from you in such cases) I would by no means have parted with for an exemption from all the uneasinesses mixed with it : But it would be unjust to imagine my taste was any rule for yours ; for which reason my letters are shorter and less frequent than they would be, had I any materials but myself to entertain you with. Love and brown sugar must be a poor regale for one of your goût, and, alas ! you know I am by trade a grocer.† Scandal (if I had any) is a merchandize you do not profess dealing in ;

\* Mr. Walpole, on my informing him that it was my intention to publish the principal part of Mr. Gray's correspondence with Mr. West, very obligingly communicated to me the letters which he had also received from Mr. Gray at the same period. From this collection I have selected such as I thought would be most likely to please the generality of readers ; omitting, though with regret, many of the more sprightly and humorous sort, because either from their personality, or some other local circumstance, they did not seem so well adapted to hit the public taste. I shall say more upon this subject in a subsequent section, when I give my idea of Mr. Gray's peculiar vein of humour.

† i. e. A man who deals only in coarse and ordinary wares, to these he compares the plain sincerity of his own friendship, undisguised by flattery ; which, had he chosen to carry on the allusion, he might have termed the trade of a Confectioner.

now and then, indeed, and to oblige a friend, you may perhaps slip a little out of your pocket, as a decayed gentlewoman would a piece of right mecklin, or a little quantity of run tea, but this only now and then, not to make a practice of it. Monsters appertaining to this climate you have seen already, both wet and dry. So you perceive within how narrow bounds my pen is circumscribed, and the whole contents of my share in our correspondence may be reduced under the two heads of the 1st, You, 2dly, I; the first is, indeed, a subject to expatiate upon, but you might laugh at me for talking about what I do not understand; the second is so tiny, so tiresome, that you shall hear no more of it than that it is ever

Yours.

*Peterhouse, Dec. 23, 1736.*

## LETTER VII.

Mr. WEST to Mr. GRAY.

I Have been very ill, and am still hardly recovered. Do you remember Elegy 5th, Book the 3d, of Tibullus, Vos tenet, &c. and do you remember a letter of Mr. Pope's, in sickness, to Mr. Steele? This melancholy elegy and this melancholy letter I turned into a more melancholy epistle of my own, during my sickness, in the way of imitation; and this I send to you and my friends at Cambridge not to divert them, for it cannot, but merely to show them how sincere I was when sick: I hope my sending it to them now may convince them I am no less sincere, though perhaps more simple, when well,

A D

## AD AMICOS.\*

Yes, happy youths, on Camus' sedgey side,  
 You feel each joy that friendship can divide ;  
 Each realm of science and of art explore,  
 And with the antient blend the modern lore.  
 Studious alone to learn whate'er may tend  
 To raise the genius or the heart to mend ;  
 Now pleas'd along the cloyster'd walk you rove,  
 And trace the verdant mazes of the grove,  
 Where social oft, and oft alone, ye chuse  
 To catch the zephyr and to court the muse.  
 Mean time at me (while all devoid of art  
 These lines give back the image of my heart)  
 At me the pow'r that comes or soon or late,  
 Or aims, or seems to aim, the dart of fate ;  
 From you remote, methinks, alone I stand  
 Like some sad exile in a desert land ;  
 Around no friends their lenient care to join  
 In mutual warmth, and mix their heart with mine.  
 Or real pains, or those which fancy raise,  
 For ever blot the sunshine of my days ;  
 To sickness still, and still to grief a prey,  
 Health turns from me her rosy face away.

Just heav'n ! what sin, ere life begins to bloom,  
 Devotes my head untimely to the tomb ;  
 Did e'er this hand against a brother's life  
 Drug the dire bowl or point the murd'rous knife ?  
 Did e'er this tongue the slanderer's tale proclaim,  
 Or madly violate my Maker's name ?  
 Did e'er this heart betray a friend or foe,  
 Or know a thought but all the world might know ?

\* Almost all Tibullus's elegy is imitated in this little piece,  
 from whence his transition to Mr. Pope's letter is very art-  
 fully contrived, and bespeaks a degree of judgment much be-  
 yond Mr. West's years.

As yet just started from the lists of time,  
My growing years have scarcely told their prime;  
Useless, as yet, through life I've idly run,  
No pleasures tasted, and few duties done.

\* Ah, who, ere autumn's mellowing suns appear,  
Would pluck the promise of the vernal year;  
Or, ere the grapes their purple hue betray,  
Tear the crude cluster from the mourning spray?  
Stern Power of Fate, whose ebon sceptre rules  
The Stygian deserts and Cimmerian pools,  
Forbear, nor rashly smite my youthful heart,  
A victim yet unworthy of thy dart;  
Ah, stay till age shall blast my withering face,  
Shake in my head, and falter in my pace;  
Then aim the shaft, then meditate the blow,  
† And to the dead my willing shade shall go.

How weak is Man to Reason's judging eye!  
Born in this moment, in the next we die;  
Part mortal clay, and part ethereal fire,  
Too proud to creep, too humble to aspire.  
In vain our plans of happiness we raise,  
Pain is our lot, and patience is our praise;  
Wealth, lineage, honours, conquest, or a throne,  
Are what the wise would fear to call their own.  
Health is at best a vain precarious thing,  
And fair-fac'd youth is ever on the wing;

\* *Quid fraudare juvat vitem crescentibus uvis?*

*Et modo nata mala vellere poma manu?*

So the original. The paraphrase seems to me infinitely more beautiful. There is a peculiar blemish in the second line, arising from the synonymes *mala* and *poma*.

† Here he quits Tibullus; the ten following verses have but a remote reference to Mr. Pope's letter.

† 'Tis



\* 'Tis like the stream, aside whose wat'ry bed  
 Some blooming plant exalts his flow'ry head,  
 Nurs'd by the wave the spreading branches rise,  
 Shade all the ground and flourish to the skies ;  
 The waves the while beneath in secret flow,  
 And undermine the hollow bank below ;  
 Wide and more wide the waters urge their way,  
 Bare all the roots and on their fibres prey.  
 Too late the plant bewails his foolish pride,  
 And sinks, untimely, in the whelming tide.

But why repine ! does life deserve my sigh ?  
 Few will lament my loss whene'er I die.  
 † For those the wretches I despise or hate,  
 I neither envy nor regard their fate.  
 For me, whene'er all-conquering Death shall spread  
 His wings around my unrepining head,  
 † I care not ; though this face be seen no more,  
 The world will pass as cheerful as before,

Bright

\* " Youth, at the very best, is but the betrayer of human  
 " life in a gentler and smoother manner than age ; 'tis like  
 " the stream that nourishes a plant upon a bank, and causes  
 " it to flourish and blossom to the sight, but at the same time  
 " is undermining it at the root in secret." *Pope's Works*,  
*vol. 7, page 254, 1st edit. Warburton.*—Mr. West, by prolong-  
 ing his paraphrase of this simile, gives it additional beauty  
 from that very circumstance, but he ought to have introduced  
 it by Mr. Pope's own thought, " Youth is a betrayer ;" his  
 couplet preceding the simile conveys too general a reflection.

† " I am not at all uneasy at the thought that many men,  
 " whom I never had any esteem for, are likely to enjoy this  
 " world after me." *Vide ibid.*

‡ " The morning after my exit the sun will rise as bright  
 " as ever, the flowers smell as sweet, the plants spring as  
 " green ;" so far Mr. West copies his original, but instead of  
 the following part of the sentence " People will laugh as  
 " heartily, and marry as fast as they used to do," he inserts a  
 more solemn idea,

Nor

Bright as before the day-star will appear,  
 The fields as verdant, and the skies as clear :  
 Nor storms nor comets will my doom declare,  
 Nor signs on earth, nor portents in the air ;  
 Unknown and silent will depart my breath,  
 Nor Nature e'er take notice of my death.  
 Yet some there are (ere spent my vital days)  
 Within whose breasts my tomb I wish to raise:  
 Lov'd in my life, lamented in my end,  
 Their praise would crown me as their precepts  
 mend ;  
 To them may these fond lines my name endear,  
 Not from the Poet but the Friend sincere.

*Christ Church, July 4, 1737.*

## L E T T E R VIII.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WEST.

**A**FTER a month's expectation of you, and a fortnight's despair, at Cambridge, I am come to town, and to better hopes of seeing you. If what you sent me last be the product of your melancholy, what may I not expect from your more cheerful hours ? For by this time the ill health that you complain of is (I hope) quite departed ; though, if I were self-interested, I ought to wish for the continuance of any thing that could be the occasion of so much pleasure to me. Low spirits are my true

Nor storms nor comets, &c.

justly perceiving that the elegiac turn of his epistle would not admit so ludicrous a thought, as was in its place in Mr. Pope's familiar letter ; so that we see, young as he was, he had obtained the art of judiciously selecting, one of the first provinces of good taste.

and

and faithful companions ; they get up with me, go to bed with me, make journeys and returns as I do ; nay, and pay visits, and will even affect to be jocular, and force a feeble laugh with me ; but most commonly we sit alone together, and are the prettiest insipid company in the world. However, when you come, I believe they must undergo the fate of all humble companions, and be discarded. Would I could turn them to the same use that you have done, and make an Apollo of them. If they could write such verses with me, not hartshorn, nor spirit of amber, nor all that furnishes the closet of an apothecary's widow, should persuade me to part with them : But, while I write to you, I hear the bad news of Lady Walpole's death on Saturday night last. Forgive me if the thought of what my poor Horace must feel on that account, obliges me to have done in reminding you that I am

*London, Aug. 22, 1737.* Yours, &c.

## LETTER IX.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WALPOLE.

**I** Was hindered in my last, and so could not give you all the trouble I would have done. The description of a road, which your coach wheels have so often honoured, it would be needless to give you ; suffice it that I arrived safe \* at my Uncle's, who is a great hunter in imagination ; his dogs take up every chair in the house, so I am forced to stand at this present writing ; and though the gout forbids him galloping after them in the field, yet he conti-

\* At Burnham in Buckinghamshire.

nues still to regale his ears and nose with their comfortable noise and stink. He holds me mighty cheap, I perceive, for walking when I should ride, and reading when I should hunt. My comfort amidst all this is, that I have at the distance of half a mile, through a green lane, a forest (the vulgar call it a common) all my own, at least as good as so, for I spy no human thing in it but myself. It is a little chaos of mountains and precipices; mountains, it is true, that do not ascend much above the clouds, nor are the declivities quite so amazing as Dover cliff; but just such hills as people who love their necks as well as I do may venture to climb, and craggs that give the eye as much pleasure as if they were more dangerous: Both vale and hill are covered with most venerable beeches, and other very reverend vegetables, that, like most other antient people, are always dreaming out their old stories to the winds,

And as they bow their hoary tops relate,  
In murmur'ing sounds, the dark decrees of fate;  
While visions, as poetic eyes avow,  
Cling to each leaf and swarm on every bough.

At the foot of one of these squats me I, (*Il pense-ros*) and there grow to the trunk for a whole morning. The timorous hare and sportive squirrel gambol around me like Adam in Paradise, before he had an Eye; but I think he did not use to read Virgil, as I commonly do there. In this situation I often converse with my Horace, aloud too, that is talk to you, but I do not remember that I ever heard you answer me. I beg pardon for taking all the conversation to myself, but it is entirely your own fault. We have old Mr. Southern at a Gentleman's house a little way off, who often comes to see us; he is now  
seventy-



seventy-seven years old, \* and has almost wholly lost his memory ; but is as agreeable as an old man can be, at least I persuade myself so when I look at him, and think of Isabella and Oroonoko. I shall be in Town in about three weeks. Adieu.

September, 1737.

## L E T T E R X.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WALPOLE. †

I Sympathize with you in the sufferings which you foresee are coming upon you. We are both at present, I imagine, in no very agreeable situation ; for my part I am under the misfortune of having nothing to do, but it is a misfortune which thank my stars, I can pretty well bear. You are in a confusion of wine, and roaring, and hunting, and tobacco, and, heaven be praised, you too can pretty well bear it ; while our evils are no more I believe we shall not much repine. I imagine, however, you will rather choose to converse with the living dead, that adorn the walls of your apartments, than with the dead living, that deck the middles of them ; and prefer a picture of still life to the realities of a noisy one, and, as I guess, will imitate

\* He lived nine years longer, and died at the age of eighty-six. Mr. Gray always thought highly of his pathetic powers, at the same time that he blamed his ill taste for mixing them so injudiciously with farce, in order to produce that monstrous species of composition called Tragi-comedy.

† At this time with his father at Houghton. Mr. Gray writes from the same place he did before, from his Uncle's house in Buckinghamshire.

what

what you prefer, and for an hour or two at noon will stick yourself up as formal as if you had been fixed in your frame for these hundred years, with a pink or rose in one hand, and a great seal ring on the other. Your name, I assure you, has been propagated in these countries by a convert of yours, one \*\*, he has brought over his whole family to you; they were before pretty good Whigs, but now they are absolute Walpolians. We have hardly any body in the parish but knows exactly the dimensions of the hall and saloon at Houghton, and begin to believe that the \* lanthorn is not so great a consumer of the fat of the land as disaffected persons have said: For your reputation, we keep to ourselves your not hunting nor drinking hogan, either of which here would be sufficient to lay your honour in the dust. Tomorrow se'nnight I hope to be in Town, and not long after at Cambridge.

*Burnham, Sept. 1737.*

I am, &c.

## L E T T E R XI.

Mr. WEST to Mr. GRAY.

**R**ECEIVING no answer to my last letter, which I writ above a month ago, I must own I am a little uneasy. The slight shadow of you which I had in town, has only served to endear you to me the more. The moments I past with you made a strong impression upon me. I singled you out for a friend, and I would have you know me to be yours, if you deem me worthy.—Alas, Gray, you cannot imagine how miserable my time passes away. My

\* A favourite object of Tory satire at the time.

health and nerves and spirits are, thank my stars, the very worst, I think, in Oxford. Four-and-twenty hours of pure unalloy'd health together, are as unknown to me as the 400,000 characters in the Chinese vocabulary. One of my complaints has of late been so over-civil as to visit me regularly once a month—jam certus conviva. This is a painful nervous head-ach, which perhaps you have sometimes heard me speak of before. Give me leave to say, I find no physic comparable to your letters. If, as it is said in Ecclesiasticus, "Friendship be the physic of the mind," prescribe to me, dear Gray, as often and as much as you think proper, I shall be a most obedient patient.

Non ego

Fidis irascar medicis, offender amicis.

I venture here to write you down a Greek epigram,\* which I lately turned into Latin, and hope you will excuse it.

Perspicui puerum ludentem in margine rivi

Immerfit vitreæ limpidus error aquæ :

At gelido ut mater moribundum e flumine traxit

Credula, & amplexu funus inane sovet ;

Paulatim puer in dilecto pectore, somno

Languidus, æternum lumina composuit.

\* Of Posidippus. *Vide Anthologia, H. Stephan. p. 220.* Mr Gray in his MS. notes to this edition of the Anthologia (of which I shall give an account in a subsequent section) inserts this translation, and adds "Descriptio pulcherrima & quæ tenuem illum græcorum spiritum mirificè sapit;" and in conclusion, "Posidippus inter principes Anthologiæ poetæ emicat, Ptolemæi Philadelphi seculo vixit."

Adieu!

Adieu! I am going to my tutor's lectures on one Puffendorff, a very jurisprudent author as you shall read on a summer's day.

Believe me yours, &c.

*Christ Church, Dec. 2, 1738.*

## L E T T E R XII.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WEST.

**L**ITERAS, mi Favonî! \* abs te demum nudiusfertius, credo, accepi planè mellitas, nisi fortè quâ de ægritudine quâdam tuâ dictum: atque hoc sane mihi habitum est non paulò acerbius, quod te capitis morbo implicitum esse intellexi; oh morbum mihi quam odiosum! qui de industria id agit, ut ego in singulos menses, dii boni, quantis jucunditatibus orbarer! quàm ex animo mihi dolendum est, quod

Medio de fonte leporum

Surgit amari aliquid.

Salutem mehercule, nolo; tam parvipendas, atq; amici, tam improbè consulas: quanquam tute fortassis—æstuas angusto limite mundi, viamq; (ut dicitur) affectas Olympo, nos tamen non esse tam sublimes, utpote qui hisce in sordibus & sæce diutius paululum versari volumus, reminiscendum est: illæ tuæ Musæ, si te ament modo, derelinqui paulisper non nimis ægrè patientur: indulge, amabo te; plusquam soles, corporis exercitationibus: magis te campus habeat, aprico magis te dedas otio, ut ne id in-

\* Mr. Gray in all his Latin compositions, address to this Gentleman, calls him Favonius, in allusion to the name of West.



genium quod tam cultum curas, diligenter nimis  
 dum fovēs, officiosarum matrum ritu, interimas.  
 Vide quæso, quam *ιατρικῶς* tecum agimus,

*ἢ δ' ἐπίθῃσω*

*Φάρμακ' ἃ κεν πάσῃσι μεκαίνων ὁδυνῶν.*

si de his pharmacis non satis liquet; sunt festivitates  
 meræ, sunt facetiæ & risus; quos ego equidem si  
 adhibere nequeo, tamen ad præcipiendum (ut medi-  
 corum fere mos est) certè satis sim; id, quod poeticè  
 sub finem epistolæ iussisti, mihi gratissimum quidem  
 accidit; admodum latinè coctum & conditum tetrasti-  
 con, græcam tamen illam *ἀφελείαν* mirificè sapit: tu  
 quod restat, vide, fodes, huiusce homines ignorantia-  
 m; cum, unde hoc tibi sit deproniptum, (ut fatear)  
 prorsus nescio: sane ego equidem nihil in capsis re-  
 perio quo tibi minimæ partis solutio fiat. Vale, &  
 me ut soles, ama.

*A. D. 11 Kalend. Februar.*

## LETTER XIII.\*

Mr. WEST to Mr. GRAY.

**I** Ought to answer you in Latin, but I feel I dare  
 not enter the lists with you—cupidum, pater  
 optime, vires deficiunt. Seriously you write in that  
 language with a grace and an Augustan urbanity  
 that amazes me: Your Greek too is perfect in its  
 kind. And here let me wonder that a man, longè

\* This was written in French, but as I doubted whether  
 it would stand the test of polite criticism so well as the pre-  
 ceding would of learned, I chose to translate so much of it  
 as I thought necessary, in order to preserve the chain of cor-  
 respondence;

græcorum doctissimus, should be at a loss for the verse and chapter whence my epigram is taken. I am sorry I have not my Aldus with me that I might satisfy your curiosity; but he with all my other literary folks are left at Oxford, and therefore you must still rest in suspense. I thank you again and again for your medical prescription. I know very well that those "risus festivitates & facetiæ" would contribute greatly to my cure, but then you must be my apothecary as well as physician, and make up the dose as well as direct it; send me, therefore, an electuary of these drugs, made up secundum artem, "et eris mihi magnus Apollo," in both his capacities as a god of poets and god of physicians. Wish me joy of leaving my college, and leave yours as fast as you can: I shall be settled at the Temple very soon.

*Dartmouth-street, Feb. 21, 1737-8.*

## L E T T E R   X I V .

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WEST.

\* **B**ARBARAS ædes aditure mecum  
 Quas Eris semper fovet inquieta,  
 Lis ubi latè sonat, et togatum  
 Æstuat agmen!

\* I choose to call this delicate Sapphic Ode the first original production of Mr. Gray's muse; for verses imposed either by schoolmasters or tutors ought not, I think, to be taken into the consideration. There is seldom a verse that flows well from the pen of a real Poet if it does not flow voluntarily.

Dulcius quanto, patulis sub ulmi  
Hospitæ ramis temerè jacentem  
Sic libris horas, tenuiq; inertes  
Fallere Musâ ?

Sæpe enim curis vagor expeditâ  
Mente ; dum, blandam meditans Camœnam,  
Vix malo rori, meminive feræ  
Cedere nocti ;

Et, pedes quò me rapiunt, in omni  
Collè Parnassum videor videre  
Fertilem sylvæ, gelidamq; in omni  
Fonte Aganippen.

Risit & Ver me, facilesq; Nymphæ  
Nare captantem, nec ineleganti,  
Manè quicquid de violis eundo  
Surripit aura :

Me reclinatum teneram per herbam ;  
Quà leves cursus aqua cunque ducit,  
Et moras dulci strepitu lapillo  
Nectit in omni.

Hæ novò nostrum ferè pectus anno  
Simplicis curæ tenuere, cœlum  
Quamdiù sudum explicuit Favonî  
Purior hora :

Otia et campos nec adhuc relinquo,  
Nec magis Phœbo Clytie fidelis ;  
(Ingruant venti licet, et fenescat  
Mollior æstas.)

Namque,

Namque, seu, lätos hominum labores  
Prataq; & montes recreante curru,  
Purpurâ tractus oriens Eoos

Vestit, et auro;

Sedulus servo veneratus orbem  
Prodigum splendoris : amœniori  
Sive dilectam meditatur igne

Pingere Calpen;

Usque dum, fulgore magis magis jam  
Languido circum, variata nubes  
Labitur furtim, viridisq; in umbras

Scena recessit.

O ego felix, vice si (nec unquam  
Surgerem rursus) simili cadentem  
Parca me lenis fingeret quieto

Fallere Letho!

Multâ flagranti radiisq; cincto  
Integris ah! quam nihil inviderem,  
Cum Dei ardentes medius quadrigas

Sentit Olympus?

Ohe! amicule noster, et unde, fodes tu *μυστοπά-  
τακτος* adeò repente evasisti? jam te rogaturum  
credo. Nescio hercle, sic planè habet. Quicquid  
enim nugarum *ἐπὶ σχολῆς* inter ambulandum in pa-  
limpsesto scriptitavi, hisce te maxumè impertiri visum  
est, quippe quem probare, quod meum est, aut certè  
ignoscere solitum probè novi: bonâ tuâ veniâ sit si  
fortè videar in fine subtristior; nam risui jamjudum



salutem dixi ; etiam paulò mœstitiæ studiosiorem  
factum scias, promptumque, *Καινοῖς παλαιὰ*  
*δακρύοις σέγειν κακὰ.*

O lachrymarum fons, tenero sacros  
Ducentium ortus ex animo ; quater  
Felix ! in imo qui scatentem  
Pectore te, pia Nympha, sensit.

Sed de me fatis. Cura ut valeas.

*Jun. 1738.*

## LETTER XV.

Mr. WEST to Mr. GRAY.

**I** Return you a thousand thanks for your elegant  
ode, and wish you every joy you wish yourself in  
it. But take my word for it, you will never spend  
so agreeable a day here as you describe ; alas ! the  
fun with us only rises to shew us the way to West-  
minster-Hall. Nor must I forget thanking you for  
your little Alcaic fragment. The optic Naiads are  
infinitely obliged to you.

I was last week at Richmond Lodge, with Mr.  
Walpole, for two days, and dined with \* Cardinal  
Fleury ; as far as my short sight can go, the charac-  
ter of his great art and penetration is very just, he  
is indeed

Nulli penetrabilis astro.

\* Sir Robert Walpole.

Igo

I go to-morrow to Epsom, where I shall be for about a month. Excuse me, I am in haste \*, but believe me always, &c.

August 29, 1738.

## LETTER XVI.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WALPOLE.

**M**Y dear Sir, I should say † Mr. Inspector General of the Exports and Imports ; but that appellation would make but an odd figure in conjunction with the three familiar monosyllables above written, for

Non bene conveniunt nec in unâ sede morantur  
Majestas & amor.

Which is, being interpreted, Love does not live at the Custom-house ; however, by what style, title, or denomination soever you choose to be dignified or distinguished hereafter, these three words will stick by you like a burr, and you can no more get quit of these and your christian name than St. Anthony could of his pig. My motions at present (which you are pleased to ask after) are much like

\* Mr. West seems to have been, indeed, in haste when he writ this letter ; else, surely, his fine taste would have led him to have been more profuse in his praise of the Alcaic fragment. He might (I think) have said, without paying too extravagant a compliment to Mr. Gray's genius, that no poet of the Augustan age ever produced four more perfect lines, or what would sooner impose upon the best critic, as being a genuine antient composition.

† Mr. Walpole was just named to that post, which he exchanged soon after for that of Usher of the Exchequer.

those of a pendulum or (\* Dr. Longically speaking) oscillatory. I swing from Chapel or Hall home, and from home to Chapel or Hall. All the strange incidents that happen in my journies and returns I shall be sure to acquaint you with ; the most wonderful is, that it now rains exceedingly, this has refreshed the † prospect, as the way for the most part lies between green fields, on either hand, terminated with buildings at some distance, castles, I presume, and of great antiquity. The roads are very good, being, as I suspect, the works of Julius Cæsar's army, for they still preserve, in many places, the appearance of a pavement in pretty good repair, and, if they were not so near home, might perhaps be as much admired as the Via Appia ; there are at present several rivulets to be crossed, and which serve to enliven the view all around. The country is exceeding fruitful in ravens and such black cattle ; but, not to tire you with my travels, I abruptly conclude

Yours, &c.

*August, 1738.*

## L E T T E R   X V I I .

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WEST.

**I** AM coming away all so fast, and leaving behind me, without the least remorse, all the beauties of sturbridge Fair. Its white bears may roar, its apes may wring their hands, and crocodiles cry their eyes out, all's one for that ; I shall not once visit

\* Dr. Long, the master of Pembroke Hall, at this time read lectures in experimental philosophy.

† All that follows is a humorously hyperbolic description of the quadrangle of Peter-House.

them,

them, nor so much as take my leave. The university has published a severe edict against schismatical congregations, and created half a dozen new little procterlings to see its orders executed, being under mighty apprehensions lest \* Henley and his gilt tub should come to the Fair and seduce their young ones ; but their pains are to small purpose, for lo, after all, he is not coming.

I am at this instant in the very agonies of leaving college, and would not wish the worst of my enemies a worse situation. If you knew the dust, the old boxes, the bedsteads, and tutors that are about my ears, you would look upon this letter as a great effort of my resolution and unconcernedness in the midst of evils. I fill up my paper with a loose sort of version of that scene in *Pastor Fido* that begins, *Care selve beati*. †

Sept. 1738.

L E T-

\* Orator Henley.

† This Latin version is extremely elegiac, but as it is only a version I do not insert it. Mr. Gray did not begin to learn Italian till about a year and a half before he translated this scene ; and I find amongst his papers an English translation of part of the 4th Canto of Tasso's *Gierusalem Liberata*, done previously to this, which has great merit. In a letter to Mr. West, dated, March, 1737, he says, " I learn Italian like any  
" dragon, and in two months am got through the 16th book  
" of Tasso, whom I hold in great admiration : I want you to  
" learn too, that I may know your opinion of him ; nothing  
" can be easier than that language to any one who knows  
" Latin and French already, and there are few so copious  
" and expressive." In the same letter he tells him, " that  
" his College has set him a versifying on a public occasion,"  
" (viz. those verses which are called *Tripes*) on the theme of  
" *Luna est habitabilis*." The poem, I believe is to be found in the *Musæ Etonenses*. I would further observe, on this occasion, that though Mr. Gray had lately read and translated

Statius,



## L E T T E R XVIII.

Mr. WEST to Mr. GRAY.

**I** Thank you again and again for your two last most agreeable letters. They could not have come more a-propos ; I was without any books to divert me, and they supplied the want of every thing : I made them my classics in the Country, they were my Horace and Tibullus—Not ita loquor assentandi causâ ut probè nosti si me noris, verum quia sic mea est sententia. I am but just come to Town, and, to shew you my esteem of your favours, I venture to send you by the penny post, to your Father's, what you will find on the next page ; I hope it will reach you soon after your arrival, your boxes out of the waggon, yourself out of the coach, and tutors out of your memory.

Adieu, we shall see one another, I hope, to-morrow.

## E L E G I A.

Quod mihi tam gratæ misisti dona Camœnæ,

Qualia Mænalius Pan Deus ipse velit,

Amplector te, Graie, et toto corde reposco.

Oh desiderium jam nimis usque meum :

Et mihi rura placent, & me quoq ; sæpe volentem

Duxerunt Dryades per sua prata Deæ ;

Statius, yet when he attempted composition, his judgment immediately directed him to the best model of versification ; accordingly his hexameters are, as far as modern ones can be, after the manner of Virgil: They move in the succession of his pauses, and close with his elisions.

Sicubi

Sicubi lympha fugit liquido pede, sive virentem,

Magna decus nemoris, quercus opacat humum :

Illuc mane novo vagor, illuc vespere sero,

Et, noto ut jacui gramine, nota cano.

Nec nostræ ignorant divinam Amaryllida sylvæ :

Ah, si desit amor, nil mihi rura placent.

Ille jugis habitat Deus, ille in vallibus imis,

Regnat et in Cœlis, regnat & Oceano ;

Ille gregem taurosq; domat, sæviq; leonem.

Seminis ; ille feros, ultus Adonin, apros :

Quin & fervet amore nemus, ramoq; sub omni

Concentu tremulo plurima gaudet avis.

Duræ etiam in sylvis agitant connubia plantæ,

Duræ etiam & fertur saxa anima sse Venus.

Durior & saxis, & robore durior ille est,

Sincero siquis pectore amare vetat :

Non illi in manibus sanctum deponere pignus,

Non illi arcanum cor aperire velim ;

Nescit amicitias, teneros qui nescit amores :

Ah ! si nulla Venus, nil mihi rura placent.

Me licet a patriâ longè in tellure juberent

Externâ positum ducere fata dies ;

Si vultus modo amatus adesset, non ego contra

Plorarem magnos voce querente Deos.

At dulci in gremio curarum oblivia ducens

Nil cuperem præter posse placere meæ ;

Nec bona fortunæ aspiciens, neq; munera regum,

Illâ intrâ optarem brachia cara mori.

Sept. 27, 1738.

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Mr. Gray, on his return to Town, continued at his father's house in Cornhill till the March following, in which interval Mr. Walpole being disinclined to enter so early into the business of Parliament, prevailed on Sir Robert Walpole to permit him to go abroad, and

and on Mr. Gray (as was said before) to be the companion of his travels. Mr. West spent the greatest part of the winter with his mother and sister at Epsom, during which time a letter or two more passed between the two friends. But these I think it unnecessary to insert, as I have already given sufficient specimens of the blossoms of their Genius. The Reader of taste and candour will I trust, consider them only as such ; yet will be led to think that as the one produced afterwards “ fruits worthy of paradise,” the other, had he lived longer, would also have produced them.

END OF THE FIRST SECTION.

## SECTION THE SECOND.

AS I allot this Section entirely to that part of Mr. Gray's life, which he spent in travelling through France and Italy, my province will be chiefly that of an Editor ; and my only care to select, from a large collection of letters written to his parents and to his friend Mr. West, those parts which, I imagine, will be most likely either to inform or amuse the reader. The multiplicity of accounts, published, both before and after the time when these letters were written, of those very places which Mr. Gray describes, will necessarily take from them much of their novelty ; yet the elegant ease of his epistolary style has a charm in it for all readers of true taste, that will make every apology of this sort needless. They will perceive, that as these letters were written without even the most distant view of publication, they are essentially different in their manner of description from any other that have either preceded or followed them ; add to this, that they are interspersed occasionally with some exquisitely finished pieces of Latin poetry, which he composed on the spot for the entertainment of his friend. But not to anticipate any part of the reader's pleasure, I shall only further say, to forewarn him of a disappointment, that this correspondence is defective towards the end, and includes no description either of Venice or its territory ; the last places which Mr. Gray visited. This defect was occasioned by an unfortunate disagreement between him and Mr. Walpole, arising from the difference of their tempers. The former being, from his earliest years,

curious,



curious, pensive, and philosophical ; the latter gay, lively, and, consequently, inconsiderate : \* this therefore occasioned their separation at Reggio. Mr. Gray went before him to Venice ; and staying there only till he could find means of returning to England, he made the best of his way home, repassing the Alps, and following almost the same route through France by which he had before gone to Italy.

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## L E T T E R I.

Mr. GRAY to his MOTHER.

*Amiens, April 1, N. S. 1739.*

**A**S we made but a very short journey to-day, and came to our inn early, I sit down to give you some account of our expedition. On the 29th (according to the style here) we left Dover at twelve at noon, and with a pretty brisk gale, which pleased every body mighty well, except myself who was extremely sick the whole time ; we reached Calais by five : The weather changed, and it began to snow hard the minute we came into the harbour, where we took the boat, and soon landed. Calais is an exceeding old, but very pretty town, and we hardly saw any thing there that was not so new and so

\* In justice to the memory of so respectable a friend, Mr. Walpole enjoins me to charge him with the chief blame in their quarrel ; confessing that more attention, complaisance, and deference to a warm friendship, and superior judgment and prudence, might have prevented a rupture that gave much uneasiness to them both, and a lasting concern to the survivor ; though in the Year 1744, a reconciliation was effected between them, by a lady who wished well to both parties.

different

different from England, that it surprized us agreeably. We went the next morning to the great Church, and were at high Mass (it being Easter Monday). We saw also the convent of the Capuchins, and the Nuns of St. Dominic ; with these last we held much conversation, especially with an English Nun, a Mrs. Davis, of whose work I sent you, by the return of the packet, a letter-case to remember her by. In the afternoon we took a Post-chaise (it still snowing very hard) for Boulogne, which was only eighteen miles further. This chaise is a strange sort of conveyance, of much greater use than beauty, resembling an ill-shaped chariot, only with the door opening before instead of the side ; three horses draw it, one between the shafts, and the other two on each side, on one of which the postillion rides, and drives too : \* This vehicle will upon occasion, go fourscore miles a-day, but Mr. Walpole, being in no hurry, chooses to make easy journeys of it, and they are easy ones indeed ; for the motion is much like that of a Sedan, we go about six miles an hour, and commonly change horses at the end of it : it is true they are no very graceful steeds, but they go well, and through roads which they say are bad for France, but to me they seem gravel walks and bowling-greens ; in short it would be the finest travelling in the world, were it not for the inns, which are mostly terrible places indeed. But to describe our progress somewhat more regularly, we came into Boulogne when it was almost dark, and went out pretty early on Tuesday morning ; so that all I can say about it is, that it is a large, old, fortified town, with more English

\* This was before the introduction of Post-chaises here, else it would not have appeared a circumstance worthy notice.

in it than French. On Tuesday we were to go to Abbéville, seventeen leagues, or fifty-one short English miles; but by the way we dined at Montreuil, much to our hearts' content, on stinking mutton cutlets, addle eggs, and ditch water. Madame the hostess made her appearance in long lappets of bone lace and a sack of linsey-woolsey. We supped and lodged pretty well at Abbéville, and had time to see a little of it before we came out this morning. There are seventeen convents in it, out of which we saw the chapels of the Minims and the Carmelite Nuns. We are now come further thirty miles to Amiens, the chief city of the province of Picardy. We have seen the cathedral, which is just what that of Canterbury must have been before the reformation. It is about the same size, a huge Gothic building, beset on the outside with thousands of small statues, and within adorned with beautiful painted windows, and a vast number of chapels dressed out in all their finery of altar pieces, embroidery, gilding, and marble. Over the high altar is preserved, in a very large wrought shrine of massy gold, the reliques of St. Firmin, their patron saint. We went also to the chapels of the Jesuits and Ursuline Nuns, the latter of which is very richly adorned. To-morrow we shall lie at Clermont, and next day reach Paris. The country we have passed through hitherto has been flat, open, but agreeably diversified with villages, fields well-cultivated, and little rivers. On every hillock is a wind-mill, a crucifix, or a Virgin Mary dressed in Flowers, and a sarcenet robe; one sees not many people or carriages on the road; now and then indeed you meet a strolling friar, a country-man with his great muff,

or

or a woman riding astride on a little ass, with short petticoats, and a great head-dress of blue wool. \*\*\*

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## L E T T E R II.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WEST.

*Paris, April 12, 1739.*

**E**NFIN donc me voici à Paris. Mr. Walpole is gone out to supper at Lord Conway's, and here I remain alone, though invited too. Do not think I make a merit of writing to you preferably to a good supper; for these three days we have been here, have actually given me an aversion to eating in general. If hunger be the best sauce to meat, the French are certainly the worst cooks in the world; for what tables we have seen have been so delicately served, and so profusely, that, after rising from one of them, one imagines it impossible ever to eat again. And now, if I tell you all I have in my head, you will believe me mad, mais n'importe, courage, allons! for if I wait till my head grows clear and settle a little, you may stay long enough for a letter. Six days have we been coming hither, which other people do in two; they have not been disagreeable ones, through a fine, open, country, admirable roads, and in an easy conveyance; the inns not absolutely intolerable, and images quite unusual presenting themselves on all hands. At Amiens we saw the fine cathedral, and eat paté des perdrix; passed through the park of Chantilly by the Duke of Bourbon's palace, which we only beheld as we passed; broke down at Lusarch; stopt at St. Dennis, saw all the beautiful



beautiful monuments of the Kings of France, and the vast treasures of the abbey, rubies, and emeralds as big as small eggs, crucifixes, and vases, crowns and reliquaries, of inestimable value; but of all their curiosities the thing the most to our tastes, and which they indeed do the justice to esteem the glory of their collection, was a vase of an entire onyx, measuring at least five inches over, three deep, and of great thickness. It is at least two thousand years old, the beauty of the stone and sculpture upon it (representing the mysteries of Bacchus) beyond expression admirable; we have dreamed of it ever since. The jolly old Benedictine, that showed us the treasures, had in his youth been ten years a foldier; he laughed at all the reliques, was very full of stories, and mighty obliging. On Saturday evening we got to Paris, and were driven through the streets a long while before we knew where we were. The minute we came, voila Milors Holderneffe, Conway, and his brother; all stayed supper, and till two o'clock in the morning, for here nobody ever sleeps; it is not the way: Next day go to dine at my Lord Holderneffe's, there was the Abbé Prevôt, author of the Cleveland, and several other pieces much esteemed; the rest were English. At night we went to the Pandore; a spectacle literally, for it is nothing but a beautiful piece of Machinery of three scenes. The first represents the chaos, and by degrees the separation of the elements. The second, the temple of Jupiter, and the giving of the box to Pandora. The third, the opening of the box, and all the mischiefs that ensued. An absurd design, but executed in the highest perfection, and that in one of the finest theatres in the world; it is the grande sale des machines in the Palais des Tuileries. Next day dined at Lord Waldegrave's; then to the opera.

Imagine

Imagine to yourself for the drama four acts entirely unconnected with each other, each founded on some little history, skilfully taken out of an ancient author, e. g. Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, &c. and with great address converted into a French piece of gallantry. For instance, that which I saw, called the *Ballet de la Paix*, had its first act built upon the story of *Nireus*. Homer having said he was the handsomest man of his time, the poet, imagining such a one could not want a mistress, has given him one. These two come in and sing sentiment in lamentable strains, neither air nor recitative; only to one's great joy, they are every now and then interrupted by a dance or (to one's great sorrow) by a chorus that borders the stage from one end to the other, and screams, past all power of simile to represent. The second act was *Baucis and Philemon*. *Baucis* is a beautiful young shepherdess, and *Philemon* her swain. *Jupiter* falls in love with her, but nothing will prevail upon her; so it is all mighty well, and the chorus sing and dance the praises of *Constancy*. The two other acts were about *Iphis and Ianthe*, and the *Judgment of Paris*. Imagine, I say, all this transacted by cracked voices, trilling divisions upon two notes and an half, accompanied by an orchestra of humstrums, and a whole house more attentive than if *Farinelli* sung, and you will almost have formed a just notion of the thing.\* Our astonishment at their absurdity you can never conceive; we had enough

\* Our author's sentiments here seem to correspond entirely with those which *J. J. Rousseau* afterwards published in his famous *Lettre sur la Musique Française*. In a French letter also, which *Mr. Gray* writ to his friend soon after this, he calls their music "des miaulemens & des heurlemens effroyables, mêlés avec un tintamarre du diable: voilà la musique Française en abrégé."

to do to express it by screaming an hour louder than the whole dramatis personæ. We have also seen twice the Comedie Française ; first, the Mahomet Second, a tragedy that has had a great run of late ; and the thing itself does not want its beauties, but the actors are beyond measure delightful. Mademoiselle Gouffin (Mr. Voltaire's Zara) has with a charming (though little) person the most pathetic tone of voice, the finest expression in her face, and most proper action imaginable. There is also a Dufrené, who did the chief character, a handsome man and a prodigious fine actor. The second we saw was the Philosophe marié, and here they performed as well in comedy ; there is a Mademoiselle Quinault, somewhat in Mrs. Clive's way, and a Monsieur Grandval, in the nature of Wilks, who is the genteelst thing in the world. There are several more would be much admired in England, and many (whom we have not seen) much celebrated here. Great part of our time is spent in seeing churches and palaces full of fine pictures, &c. the quarter of which is not yet exhausted. For my part, I could entertain myself this month merely with the common streets and the people in them. \*\*\*

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### LETTER III.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WEST.

*Paris, May 22, 1739.*

**A**FTER the little particulars aforesaid I should have proceeded to a journal of our transactions for this week past, should have carried you post from hence to Versailles, hurried you through the gardens

gardens to Trianon, back again to Paris, so away to Chantilly. But the fatigue is perhaps more than you can bear, and moreover I think I have reason to stomach your last piece of gravity. Supposing you were in your soberest mood, I am sorry you should think me capable of ever being so dissip  , so evapor  , as not to be in a condition of relishing any thing you could say to me. And now, if you have a mind to make your peace with me, arouse ye from your megrims and your melancholies, and (for exercise is good for you) throw away your night-cap, call for your jack-boots, and set out with me, last Saturday evening, for Versailles—and so at eight o'clock, passing through a road speckled with vines, and villas, and hares, and partridges, we arrive at the great avenue, flanked on either hand with a double row of trees about half a mile long, and with the palace itself to terminate the view ; facing which, on each side of you is placed a semicircle of very handsome buildings, which form the stables. These we will not enter into, because you know we are no jockies. Well ! and is this the great front of Versailles ? What a huge heap of littleness ! it is composed, as it were, of three courts, all open to the eye at once, and gradually diminishing till you come to the royal apartments, which on this side present but half a dozen windows and a balcony. This last is all that can be called a front, for the rest is only great wings. The hue of all this mass is black, dirty red, and yellow ; the first proceeding from stone changed by age ; the second, from a mixture of brick ; and the last, from a profusion of tarnished gilding. You cannot see a more disagreeable tout-ensemble ; and, to finish the matter, it is all stuck over in many places with small busts of a sawny hue between every window. We pass through  
this



this to go into the garden, and here the case is indeed altered ; nothing can be vaster and more magnificent than the back front ; before it a very spacious terrace spreads itself, adorned with two large basons ; these are bordered and lined (as most of the others) with white marble, with handsome statues of bronze reclined on their edges. From hence you descend a huge flight of steps into a semicircle formed by woods, that are cut all round into niches, which are filled with beautiful copies of all the famous antique statues in white marble. Just in the middle is the bason of Latona ; she and her children are standing on the top of a rock in the middle, on the sides of which are the peasants, some half, some totally changed into frogs, all which throw out water at her in great plenty. From this place runs on the great alley, which brings you into a compleat round, where is the bason of Apollo, the biggest in the gardens. He is rising in his car out of the water, surrounded by nymphs and tritons, all in bronze, and finely executed, and these as they play, raise a perfect storm about him ; beyond this is the great canal, a prodigious long piece of water, that terminates the whole : All this you have at one coup d'oeil in entering the garden, which is truly great. I cannot say as much of the general taste of the place ; every thing you behold favours too much of art ; all is forced, all is constrained about you ; statues and vases sowed every where without distinction ; sugar-loaves and minced-pies of yew ; scrawl-work of box, and little squirting jets-d'eau, besides a great sameness in the walks, cannot help striking one at first sight, not to mention the silliest of labyrinths, and all Æsop's fables in water ; since these were designed in usum Delphini only. Here then we walk by moonlight, and hear the ladies and the nightingales sing.

Next

Next morning, being Whitsunday, make ready to go to the Installation of nine Knights du Saint Esprit, Cambis is one: high mass celebrated with music, great croud, much incense, King, Queen, Dauphin, Mesdames, Cardinals, and Court: Knights arrayed by his majesty; reverences before the altar, not bows, but curtsies; stiff hams; much tittering among the ladies; trumpets, kettle-drums and fifes. My dear West, I am vastly delighted with Trianon, all of us with Chantilly; if you would know why, you must have patience, for I can hold my pen no longer, except to tell you that I saw Britannicus last night; all the characters, particularly Agrippina and Nero, done to perfection; to-morrow Phædra and Hippolitus. We are making you a little bundle of petites pieces; there is nothing in them, but they are acting at present; there are too Crebillon's Letters, and Amusemens sur le language des Bêtes, said to be of one Bougeant, a Jesuit; they are both esteemed, and lately come out. This day se'nnight we go to Rheims.

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#### L E T T E R IV.

Mr. GRAY to his MOTHER.

*Rheims, June 21, N. S. 1739.*

WE have now been settled almost three weeks in this city, which is more considerable upon account of its size and antiquity, than from the number of its inhabitants, or any advantages of commerce. There is little in it worth a stranger's curiosity, besides the cathedral church, which is a vast Gothick building of a surprizing beauty and lightness,

ness, all covered over with a profusion of little statues and other ornaments. It is here the Kings of France are crowned by the Archbishop of Rheims, who is the first-Peer, and the Primate of the kingdom: The holy vessel made use of on that occasion, which contains the oil, is kept in the church of St. Nicasius hard by, and is believed to have been brought by an angel from heaven at the coronation of Clovis, the first christian king. The streets in general have but a melancholy aspect, the houses all old; the public walks run along the side of a great moat under the ramparts, where one hears a continual croaking of frogs; the country round about is one great plain covered with vines, which at this time of the year afford no very pleasing prospect, as being not above a foot high. What pleasures the place denies to the sight, it makes up to the palate; since you have nothing to drink but the best champagne in the world, and all sorts of provisions equally good. As to other pleasures, there is not that freedom of conversation among the people of fashion here, that one sees in other parts of France; for though they are not very numerous in this place, and consequently must live a good deal together, yet they never come to any great familiarity with one another. As my Lord Conway had spent a good part of his time among them, his brother, and we with him, were soon introduced into all their assemblies: As soon as you enter, the lady of the house presents each of you a card, and offers you a party at quadrille; you sit down and play forty deals without intermission, excepting one quarter of an hour, when every body rises to eat of what they call the gouter, which supplies the place of our tea, and is a service of wine, fruits, cream, sweetmeats, crawfish and cheese. People take what they like,  
and

and sit down again to play ; after that, they make little parties to go to the walks together, and then all the company retire to their separate habitations. Very seldom any suppers or dinners are given ; and this is the manner they live among one another ; not so much out of any aversion they have to pleasure, as out of a sort of formality they have contracted by not being much frequented by people who have lived at Paris. It is sure they do not hate gaiety any more than the rest of their country-people, and can enter into diversions, that are once proposed, with a good grace enough ; for instance, the other evening we happened to be got together in a company of eighteen people, men and women of the best fashion here, at a garden in the town to walk ; when one of the ladies bethought herself of asking, Why should not we sup here ? Immediately the cloth was laid by the side of a fountain under the trees, and a very elegant supper served up ; after which another said, Come, let us sing ; and directly began herself : From singing we insensibly fell to dancing, and singing in a round ; when somebody mentioned the violins, and immediately a company of them was ordered : Minuets were begun in the open air, and then came country-dances, which held till four o'Clock next morning ; at which hour the gayest lady there proposed, that such as were weary should get into their coaches, and the rest of them should dance before them with the music in the van ; and in this manner we paraded through all the principal streets of the city, and waked every body in it. Mr. Walpole had a mind to make a custom of the thing, and would have given a ball in the same manner next week, but the women did not come into it ; so I believe it will drop, and they



will return to their dull cards, and usual formalities. We are not to stay above a month longer here, and shall then go to Dijon, the chief city of Burgundy, a very splendid and a very gay town ; at least such is the present design.

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## L E T T E R V.

Mr. GRAY to his FATHER.

*Dijon, Friday, Sept. 11, N. S. 1739.*

WE have made three short days journey of it from Rheims hither, where we arrived the night before last : The road we have passed through has been extremely agreeable ; it runs through the most fertile part of Champagne by the side of the river Marne, with a chain of hills on each hand at some distance, entirely covered with woods and vineyards, and every now and then the ruins of some old castle on their tops ; we lay at St. Dizier the first night, and at Langres the second, and got hither the next evening time enough to have a full view of the city in entering it : It lies in a very extensive plain covered with vines and corn, and consequently is plentifully supplied with both. I need not tell you that it is the chief city of Burgundy, nor that it is of great antiquity ; considering which one should imagine it ought to be larger than one finds it. However, what it wants in extent, is made up in beauty and cleanliness, and in rich convents and churches, most of which we have seen. The palace of the States is a magnificent new building, where the Duke of Bourbon is lodged when he comes

comes every three years to hold that Assembly, as governor of the Province. A quarter of a mile out of the town is a famous Abbey of Carthusians, which we are just returned from seeing. In their chapel are the tombs of the ancient Dukes of Burgundy, that were so powerful, till at the death of Charles the Bold, the last of them, this part of his dominions was united by Lewis XI. to the crown of France. To-morrow we are to pay a visit to the Abbot of the Cistercians, who lives a few leagues off, and who uses to receive all strangers with great civility ; his Abbey is one of the richest in the kingdom ; he keeps open house always, and lives with great magnificence. We have seen enough of this town already, to make us regret the time we spent at Rheims ; it is full of people of condition, who seem to form a much more agreeable society than we found in Champagne ; but as we shall stay here but two or three days longer, it is not worth while to be introduced into their houses. On Monday or Tuesday we are to set out for Lyons, which is two days journey distant, and from thence you shall hear again from me.

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## L E T T E R VI.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WEST.

*Lyons, Sept. 18, N. S. 1739.*

**S**Cavez vous bien, mon cher ami, que je vous hais, que je vous deteste ? voila des termes un peu fortes ; and that will save me, upon a just computation, a page of paper and six drops of ink ; which, if I confined myself to reproaches of a more

moderate nature, I should be obliged to employ in using you according to your deserts. What! to let any body reside three months at Rheims, and write but once to them? Please to consult Tully de Amicit. page 5, line 25, and you will find it said in express terms, "*Ad amicum inter Remos relegatum mense uno quinquies scriptum esto*;" nothing more plain, or less liable to false interpretations. Now because, I suppose, it will give you pain to know we are in being, I take this opportunity to tell you that we are at the ancient and celebrated Lugdunum, a city situated upon the confluence of the Rhône and Saône (Arar, I should say) two people, who though of tempers extremely unlike, think fit to join hands here, and make a little party to travel to the Mediterranean in company; the lady comes gliding along through the fruitful plains of Burgundy, *incredibili lenitate, ita ut oculis in utram partem fluit judicari non possit*; the gentleman runs all rough and roaring down from the mountains of Switzerland to meet her; and with all her soft airs she likes him never the worse; she goes through the middle of the city in state, and he passes incog. without the walls, but waits for her a little below. The houses here are so high, and the streets so narrow, as would be sufficient to render Lyons the dimmallest place in the world, but the number of people, and the face of commerce diffused about it, are, at least, as sufficient to make it the liveliest: Between these two sufficiencies, you will be in doubt what to think of it; so we shall leave the city, and proceed to its environs, which are beautiful beyond expression; it is surrounded with mountains, and those mountains all bedropped and bespeckled with houses, gardens, and plantations of the rich Bourgeois, who have from thence a prospect of the city  
in

in the vale below on one hand, on the other the rich plains of the Lyonnais, with the rivers winding among them, and the Alps, with the mountains of Dauphiné, to bound the view. All yesterday morning we were busied in climbing up Mount Fourviere, where the ancient city stood perched at such a height, that nothing but the hopes of gain could certainly ever persuade their neighbours to pay them a visit: Here are the ruins of the Emperor palaces, that resided here, that is to say, Augustus and Severus; they consist in nothing but in great masses of old wall, that have only their quality to make them respected. In a vineyard of the Minims are remains of a theatre; the Fathers, whom they belong to, hold them in no esteem at all, and would have showed us their sacristy and chapel instead of them: The Ursuline Nuns have in their garden some Roman baths, but we having the misfortune to be men, and heretics, they did not think proper to admit us. Hard by are eight arches of a most magnificent aqueduct, said to be erected by Antony, when his legions were quartered here: There are many other parts of it dispersed up and down the country, for it brought the water from a river many leagues off in La Forez. Here are remains too of Agrippa's seven great roads which met at Lyons; in some places they lie twelve feet deep in the ground: In short, a thousand matters that you shall not know, till you give me a description of the Pais de Tombridge, and the effect its waters have upon you.



## L E T T E R VII.

Mr. WEST to Mr. GRAY.

*Temple, Sept. 28, 1739.*

**I**F wishes could turn to realities, I would fling down my law books, and sup with you to-night. But, alas, here am I doomed to fix, while you are fluttering from city to city, and enjoying all the pleasures which a gay climate can afford. It is out of the power of my heart to envy you your good fortune, yet I cannot help indulging a few natural desires; as for example, to take a walk with you on the banks of the Rhône, and to be climbing up mount Fourviere;

*Jam mens prætrepidans avet vagari:*

*Jam læti studio pedes vigescunt.*

However, so long as I am not deprived of your correspondence, so long shall I always find some pleasure in being at home. And, setting all vain curiosity aside, when the fit is over, and my reason begins to come to herself, I have several other powerful motives which might easily cure me of my restless inclinations: Amongst these, my Mother's ill state of health is not the least; which was the reason of our going to Tunbridge, so that you cannot expect much description or amusement from thence. Nor indeed is there much room for either; for all diversions there may be reduced to two articles, gaming and going to church. They were pleased to publish certain Tunbri-giana this season; but such ana! I believe there were never so many vile little verses put together before. So much for Tunbridge: London affords me as little to say. What! so huge a town as London? Yes, consider only how I live in that town. I never go  
into

into the gay world or high world, and consequently receive nothing from thence to brighten my imagination. The busy world I leave to the busy ; and am resolved never to talk politics till I can act at the same time. To tell old stories, or prate of old books, seems a little 'musty ; and toujours Chapon bouilli, won't do. However, for want of better fare, take another little mouthful of my poetry.

O meæ jucunda comes quietis !

Quæ fere ægrotum solita es levare

Pectus, et sensim ah ! nimis ingruentes

Fallere curas :

Quid canes ? quanto Lyra dic furore

Gesties, quando hæc reducem sodalem

Glauciam \* gaudere simul videbis

Meque sub umbrâ ?

## LETTER VIII.

MR. GRAY to his MOTHER.

*Lyons, Oct. 13, N. S. 1739.*

**I**T is now almost five weeks since I left Dijon, one of the gayest and most agreeable little cities of France, for Lyons, its reverse in all these particulars. It is the second in the kingdom in bigness and rank, the streets excessively narrow and nasty ; the houses immensely high and large ; (that, for instance, where we are lodged, has twenty-five rooms on a floor, and that for five stories) it swarms with inhabitants like Paris itself, but chiefly a mercantile people, too much given up to commerce to think of their own, much less of a stranger's diversions. We

\* He gives Mr. Gray the name of Glaucias frequently in his Latin verse, as Mr. Gray calls him Favonius.

have no acquaintance in the town, but such English as happen to be passing through here, in their way to Italy and the South, which at present happen to be near thirty in number. It is a fortnight since we set out from hence upon a little excursion to Geneva. We took the longest road, which lies through Savoy, on purpose to see a famous monastery, called the grand Chartreuse, and had no reason to think our time lost. After having travelled seven days very slow (for we did not change horses, it being impossible for a chaise to go post in these roads) we arrived at a little village, among the mountains of Savoy, called Echelles; from thence we proceeded on horses, who are used to the way, to the mountain of the Chartreuse: It is six miles to the top; the road runs winding up it, commonly not six feet broad; on one hand is the rock, with woods of pine-trees hanging over head; on the other, a monstrous precipice, almost perpendicular, at the bottom of which rolls a torrent, that sometimes tumbling among the fragments of stone that have fallen from on high, and sometimes precipitating itself down vast descents with a noise like thunder, which is still made greater by the echo from the mountains on each side, concurs to form one of the most solemn, the most romantic, and the most astonishing scenes I ever beheld: Add to this the strange views made by the craggs and cliffs on the other hand; the cascades that in many places throw themselves from the very summit down into the vale, and the river below; and many other particulars impossible to describe; you will conclude we had no occasion to repent our pains. This place St. Bruno chose to retire to, and upon its very top founded the aforesaid Convent, which is the superior of the whole order. When we came there, the two fathers,

fathers, who are commissioned to entertain strangers, (for the rest must neither speak one to another, nor to any one else) received us very kindly ; and set before us a repast of dried fish, eggs, butter, and fruits, all excellent in their kind, and extremely neat. They pressed us to spend the night there, and to stay some days with them ; but this we could not do, so they led us about their house, which is you must think, like a little city ; for there are 100 fathers, besides 300 servants, that make their clothes, grind their corn, press their wine, and do every thing among themselves : The whole is quite orderly and simple ; nothing of finery, but the wonderful decency, and the strange situation, more than supply the place of it. In the evening we descended by the same way, passing through many clouds that were then forming themselves on the mountain's side. Next day we continued our journey by Chamberry, which, though the chief city of the Dutchy, and residence of the king of Sardinia, when he comes into this part of his dominions, makes but a very mean and insignificant appearance ; we lay at Aix, once famous for its hot baths, and the next night at Annecy ; the day after, by noon, we got to Geneva. I have not time to say any thing about it, nor of our solitary journey back again. \* \* \*

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## L E T T E R IX.

Mr. GRAY to his FATHER.

*Lyons, Oct. 25, N. S. 1739.*

**I**N my last I gave you the particulars of our little journey to Geneva ; I have only to add, that we stayed about a week, in order to see Mr. Conway



way settled there : I do not wonder so many English choose it for their residence ; the city is very small, neat, prettily built, and extremely populous ; the Rhône runs through the middle of it, and it is surrounded with new fortifications, that give it a military compact air ; which, joined to the happy, lively countenances of the inhabitants, and an exact discipline always as strictly observed as in time of war, makes the little republic appear a match for a much greater power ; though perhaps Geneva, and all that belongs to it, are not of equal extent with Windsor and its two parks. To one that has passed through Savoy, as we did, nothing can be more striking than the contrast, as soon as he approaches the town. Near the gates of Geneva runs the torrent Arve, which separates it from the King of Sardinia's dominions ; on the other side of it lies a country naturally, indeed, fine and fertile, but you meet with nothing in it but meagre, ragged, bare-footed peasants, with their children, in extreme misery and nastiness ; and even of these no great numbers : You no sooner have crossed the stream I have mentioned, but poverty is no more ; not a beggar, hardly a discontented face to be seen ; numerous and well-dressed people swarming on the ramparts ; drums beating ; soldiers well-clothed and armed, exercising ; and folks with business in their looks, hurrying to and fro ; all contribute to make any person, who is not blind, sensible what a difference there is between the two governments, that are the causes of one view and the other. The beautiful lake, at one end of which the town is situated ; its extent ; the several states that border upon it ; and all its pleasures, are too well known for me to mention them. We sailed upon it as far as the dominions of Geneva extend, that is, about two leagues

leagues and an half on each side ; and landed at several of the little houses of pleasure, that the inhabitants have built all about it, who received us with much politeness. The same night we eat part of a trout, taken in the lake, that weighed thirty-seven pounds ; as great a monster as it appeared to us, it was esteemed there nothing extraordinary, and they assured us, it was not uncommon to catch them of fifty pounds ; they are dressed here, and sent post to Paris upon some great occasions ; nay, even to Madrid, as we are told. The road we returned through was not the same we came by : We crossed the Rhône at Seyffel, and passed for three days among the mountains of Bugey, without meeting with any thing new : At last we came out into the plains of La Bresse, and so to Lyons again. Sir Robert has written to Mr. Walpole, to desire he would go to Italy ; which he has resolved to do ; so that all the scheme of spending the winter in the South of France is laid aside, and we are to pass it in a much finer country. You may imagine I am not sorry to have this opportunity of seeing the place in the world that best deserves it : Besides as the Pope (who is eighty-eight, and has been lately at the point of death) cannot probably last a great while, perhaps we may have the fortune to be present at the election of a new one, when Rome will be in all its glory. Friday next we certainly begin our journey ; in two days we shall come to the foot of the Alps, and six more we shall be in passing them. Even here the winter is begun ; what then must it be among those vast snowy mountains where it is hardly ever summer ? We are, however, as well armed as possible against the cold, with muffs, hoods, and masks of beaver, fur-boots, and bear skins. When we arrive at Turin, we shall rest after the fatigues of the journey. \* \* \*

## L E T T E R X.

Mr. GRAY to his MOTHER.

*Turin, Nov. 7, N.S. 1739.*

I AM this night arrived here, and have just set down to rest me after eight days tiresome journey: For the three first we had the same road we before past through to go to Geneva; the fourth we turned out of it, and for that day and the next travelled rather among than upon the Alps; the way commonly running through a deep valley by the side of the river Arc, which works itself a passage, with great difficulty and a mighty noise, among vast quantities of rocks, that have rolled down from the mountain tops. The winter was so far advanced, as in great measure to spoil the beauty of the prospect; however there was still somewhat fine remaining amidst the savageness and horror of the place: The sixth we began to go up several of these mountains; and as we were passing one, met with an odd accident enough: Mr. Walpole had a little fat black spaniel, that he was very fond of, which he sometimes used to set down, and let it run by the chaise side. We were at that time in a very rough road, not two yards broad at most; on one side was a great wood of pines, and on the other a vast precipice; it was noon-day, and the sun shone bright, when all of a sudden from the wood-side, (which was as steep upwards, as the other part was downwards) out rushed a great wolf, came close to the head of the horses, seized the dog by the throat, and rushed up the hill again with him in his mouth. This was done in less than a quarter of a minute; we all saw it, and yet the servants had not time to draw

draw their pistols, or do any thing to save the dog\*. If he had not been there, and the creature had thought fit to lay hold of one of the horses ; chaise, and we, and all must inevitably have tumbled above fifty fathoms perpendicular down the precipice. The seventh we came to Lanebourg, the last town in Savoy ; it lies at the foot of the famous mount Cenis, which is so situated as to allow no room for any way but over the very top of it. Here the chaise was forced to be pulled to pieces, and the baggage and that to be carried by mules : We ourselves were wrapped up in our furs, and seated upon a sort of matted chair without legs, which is carried upon poles in the manner of a bier, and so began to ascend by the help of eight men. It was six miles to the top, where a plain opens itself about as many more in breadth, covered perpetually with very deep snow, and in the midst of that a great lake of unfathomable depth, from whence a river takes its rise, and tumbles over monstrous rocks quite down the other side of the mountain. The descent is six miles more, but infinitely more steep than the going up ; and here the men perfectly fly down with you, stepping from stone to stone with incredible swiftness in places where none but they could go three paces without falling. The immensity of the precipices, the roaring of the river and torrents that run into it, the huge craggs covered with ice and snow, and the clouds below you and about you, are objects it is impossible to conceive without seeing them ; and though we had heard many strange de-

\* This odd incident might have afforded Mr. Gray a subject for an ode, which would have been a good companion to that on the death of a favourite cat.



scriptions of the scene, none of them at all came up to it. We were but five hours in performing the whole, from which you may judge of the rapidity of the men's motion. We are now got into Piedmont, and stopped a little while at La Ferriere, a small village about three quarters of the way down, but still among the clouds, where we began to hear a new language spoken round about us; at last we got quite down, went through the Pás du Suse, a narrow road among the Alps, defended by two fortresses, and lay at Bossolens: Next evening thro' a fine avenue of nine miles in length, as strait as a line, we arrived at this city, which, as you know, is the capital of the principality, and the residence of the King of Sardinia. \* \* \* We shall stay here, I believe, a fortnight, and proceed for Genoa, which is three or four days journey to go post. I am, &c.

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## L E T T E R   X I.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WEST.

*Turin, Nov. 16, N. S. 1739.*

**A**FTER eight days journey through Greenland, we arrived at Turin. You approach it by a handsome avenue of nine miles long, and quite strait. The entrance is guarded by certain vigilant dragons, called Douñiers, who mumbled us for some time. The city is not large, as being a place of strength,

\* \* \* That part of the letter here omitted, contained only a description of the city; which, as Mr. Gray has given it to Mr. West in the following letter, and that in a more lively manner, I thought it unnecessary to insert. A liberty I have taken in other parts of this correspondence, in order to avoid repetitions.

and

and consequently confined within its fortifications ; it has many beauties and some faults ; among the first are streets all laid out by the line, regular uniform buildings, fine walks that surround the whole, and in general a good lively clean appearance : But the houses are of brick plaistered, which is apt to want repairing ; the windows of oiled paper, which is apt to be torn ; and every thing very slight, which is apt to tumble down. There is an excellent Opera, but it is only in the Carnival : Balls every night, but only in the Carnival. Masquerades too, but only in the Carnival. This Carnival lasts only from Christmas to Lent ; one half of the remaining part of the year is past in remembering the last, the other in expecting the future Carnival. We cannot well subsist upon such slender diet, no more than upon an execrable Italian Comedy, and a Puppet-Show, called *Representazione d'un' anima dannata*, which, I think, are all the present diversions of the place ; except the *Marquise de Cavaillac's Conversatione*, where one goes to see people play at Ombre and Taroc, a game with 72 cards all painted with suns, and moons, and devils and monks. Mr. Walpole has been at court ; the family are at present at a country palace, called *La Venerie*. The palace here in town is the very quintessence of gilding and looking-glass ; inlaid floors, carved pannels, and painting, wherever they could stick a brush. I own I have not, as yet, any where met with those grand and simple works of Art, that are to amaze one, and whose sight one is to be the better for : But those of Nature have astonished me beyond expression. In our little journey up to the *Grande Chartreuse*, I do not remember to have gone ten paces without an exclamation, that there was no restraining : Not a precipice, not a torrent, not a cliff, but is pregnant with religion

religion and poetry. There are certain scenes that would awe an atheist into belief, without the help of other argument. One need not have a very fantastic imagination to see spirits there at noon-day: You have Death perpetually before your eyes, only so far removed, as to compose the mind without frightening it. I am well persuaded St. Bruno was a man of no common genius, to choose such a situation for his retirement; and perhaps should have been a disciple of his, had I been born in his time. You may believe Abelard and Heloise were not forgot on this occasion: If I do not mistake, I saw you too every now and then at a distance among the trees; il me semble, que j'ai vu ce chien de visage là quelque part. You seemed to call to me from the other side of the precipice, but the noise of the river below was so great, that I really could not distinguish what you said; it seemed to have a cadence like verse. In your next you will be so good to let me know what it was. The week we have since passed among the Alps, has not equalled the single day upon that mountain, because the winter was rather too advanced, and the weather a little foggy. However, it did not want its beauties; the savage rudeness of the view is inconceivable without seeing it: I reckoned, in one day, thirteen cascades, the least of which was I dare say, one hundred feet in height. I had Livy in the chaise with me, and beheld his

“ Nives cælo prope immistæ, testâ informia imposita  
 “ rupibus, pecora jumentaue torrida frigore,  
 “ homines intonsi & inculti, animalia inanimaque  
 “ omnia rigentia gelu; omnia confragosa, præruptaque.”

The creatures that inhabit them are, in all respects, below humanity; and most of them, especially women, have the tumidum guttur, which they call goscia. Mount Cenis, I confess, carries the

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the permission mountains have of being frightful rather too far ; and its horrors were accompanied with too much danger to give one time to reflect upon their beauties. There is a family of the Alpine monsters I have mentioned, upon its very top, that in the middle of winter calmly lay in their stock of provisions and firing, and so are buried in their hut for a month or two under the snow. When we were down it, and had got a little way into Piedmont, we began to find " *Apricos quosdam colles, rivosque prope sylvas, et jam humana cultu digniora loca.*" I read Silius Italicus too, for the first time ; and wished for you according to custom. We set out for Genoa in two days time.

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## LETTER XII.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WEST.

*Genoa, Nov. 21, 1739.*

**H**ORRIDOS tractus, Boreæq; linquens  
 Regna Taurini fera, molliorem  
 Advehor brumam, Genuæq; amantes  
 Litora soles.

At least if they do not, they have a very ill taste ; for I never beheld any thing more amiable : Only figure to yourself a vast semicircular basin, full of fine blue sea, and vessels of all sorts and sizes, some sailing out, some coming in, and others at anchor ; and all round it palaces and churches peeping over one another's heads, gardens and marble terraces full of orange and cypress trees, fountains, and trellis-works covered with vines, which all together compose the grandest of theatres. This is the first coup d'oeil, and  
 is



is almost all I am yet able to give you an account of, for we arrived late last night. To-day was, luckily, a great festival, and in the morning we resorted to the church of the Madonna delle Vigne, to put up our little orisons ; (I believe I forgot to tell you, that we have been sometime converts to the holy Catholic church) we found our Lady richly dressed out, with a crown of diamonds on her own head, another upon the child's, and a constellation of wax-lights burning before them : Shortly after came the Doge, in his robes of crimson damask, and a cap of the same, followed by the Senate in black. Upon his approach began a fine concert of music, and among the rest two eunuchs' voices, that were a perfect feast to ears that had heard nothing but French operas for a year. We listened to this and breathed, nothing but incense for two hours. The Doge is a very tall, lean, stately old figure, called Costantino Balbi ; and the Senate seem to have been made upon the same model. They said their prayers, and heard an absurd white friar preach, with equal devotion. After this we went to the Annonciata, a church built by the family Lomellini, and belonging to it ; which is, indeed a most stately structure, the inside wholly marble of various kinds, except where gold and painting takes its place. From hence to the Palazzo Doria. I should make you sick of marble, if I told you how it was lavished here upon the porticoes, the balustrades, and terrases, the lowest of which extends quite to the sea. The inside is by no means answerable to the outward magnificence ; the furniture seems to be as old as the founder of the family. There great imbossed silver tables tell you, in bas-relief, his victories at sea ; how he entertained the Emperor Charles, and how he refused the sovereignty of the Commonwealth when it was offered.

offered him ; the rest is old-fashioned velvet chairs, and gothic tapestry. The rest of the day has been spent, much to our hearts' content, in cursing French music and architecture, and in singing the praises of Italy. We find this place so very fine, that we are in fear of finding nothing finer. We are fallen in love with the Mediterranean sea, and hold your lakes and rivers in vast contempt. This is

“ The happy country where huge lemons grow,” as Waller says ; and I am sorry to think of leaving it in a week for Parma, although it be

The happy country where huge cheeses grow.

### L E T T E R   X I I I .

Mr. GRAY to his MOTHER.

*Bologna, Dec. 9, N.S. 1739.*

OUR journey hither has taken up much less time than I expected. We left Genoa (a charming place, and one that deserved a longer stay) the week before last ; crossed the mountains, and lay that night at Tortona, the next at St. Giovanni, and the morning after came to Piacenza. That city, (though the capital of a Dutchy) made so frippery an appearance, that instead of spending some days there, as had been intended, we only dined, and went on to Parma ; stayed there all the following day, which was passed in visiting the famous works of Corregio in the Dome, and other churches. The fine gallery of pictures, that once belonged to the Dukes of Parma, is no more here ; the King of Naples has carried it all thither, and the city had not merit enough to detain us any longer, so we proceeded through  
Reggio

Reggio to Modena ; this, though the residence of its Duke, is an ill-built melancholy place, all of brick, as are most of the towns in this part of Lombardy : He himself lives in a private manner, with very little appearance of a court about him ; he has one of the noblest collections of paintings in the world, which entertained us extremely well the rest of that day and a part of the next ; and in the afternoon we came to Bologna : So now you may wish us joy of being in the dominions of his Holiness. This is a populous city, and of great extent : All the streets have porticoes on both sides, such as surround a part of Covent-Garden, a great relief in summer-time in such a climate ; and from one of the principal gates to a church of the Virgin, [where is a wonder-working picture, at three miles distance] runs a corridore of the same sort, lately finished, and indeed, a most extraordinary performance. The churches here are more remarkable for their paintings than architecture, being mostly old structures of brick ; but the palaces are numerous, and fine enough to supply us with something worth seeing from morning till night. The country of Lombardy, hitherto, is one of the most beautiful imaginable ; the roads broad, and exactly straight, and on either hand vast plantations of trees, chiefly mulberries and olives, and not a tree without a vine twining about it and spreading among its branches. This scene, indeed, which must be the most lovely in the world during the proper season, is at present all deformed by the winter, which here is rigorous enough for the time it lasts ; but one still sees the skeleton of a charming place, and reaps the benefit of its product, for the fruits and provisions are admirable ; in short you find every thing, that luxury can desire, in perfection. We have now been here a week, and shall stay some  
little

little time longer. We are at the foot of the Apennine mountains ; it will take up three days to cross them, and then we shall come to Florence, where we shall pass the Christmas. Till then we must remain in a state of ignorance as to what is doing in England, for our letters are to meet us there : If I do not find four or five from you alone, I shall wonder.

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## L E T T E R    X I V .

Mr. GRAY to his MOTHER.

*Florence, Dec. 19, N. S. 1729.*

WE spent twelve days at Bologna, chiefly (as most travellers do) in seeing sights ; for as we knew no mortal there, and as it is no easy matter to get admission into any Italian house, without very particular recommendations, we could see no company but in public places ; and there are none in that city but the churches. We saw therefore, churches, palaces, and pictures from morning to night ; and on the 15th of this month set out for Florence, and began to cross the Apennine mountains ; we travelled among and upon them all that day, and as it was but indifferent weather, were commonly in the middle of thick clouds, that utterly deprived us of a sight of their beauties : For this vast chain of hills has its beauties, and all the vallies are cultivated ; even the mountains themselves are many of them so within a little of their very tops. They are not so horrid as the Alps, though pretty near as high ; and the whole road is admirably well kept, and paved throughout, which is a length of  
four score



four-score miles and more : We left the Pope's dominions, and lay that night in those of the Grand Duke at Fiorenzuola, a paltry little town, at the foot of Mount Giogo, which is the highest of them all. Next morning we went up to it ; the post-house is open upon its very top, and usually involved in clouds, or half-buried in the snow. Indeed there was none of the last at the time we were there, but it was still a dismal habitation. The descent is most excessively steep, and the turnings very short and frequent ; however we performed it without any danger, and in coming down could dimly discover Florence, and the beautiful plain about it, through the mists ; but enough to convince us, it must be one of the noblest prospects upon earth in summer. That afternoon we got thither ; and Mr. Mann\*, the resident, had sent his servant to meet us at the gates, and conduct us to his house. He is the best and most obliging person in the world. The next night we were introduced at the Prince of Craon's assembly (he has the chief power here in the Grand Duke's absence). The Princess, and he, were extremely civil to the name of Walpole, so we were asked to stay supper, which is as much as to say, you may come and sup here whenever you please ; for after the first invitation this is always understood. We have also been at the Countess Suarez's, a favourite of the late Duke, and one that gives the first movement to every thing gay that is going forward here. The news is every day expected from Vienna of the Grand Dutchess's delivery ; if it be a boy, here will be all sorts of balls, masquerades, operas, and illuminations ; if not, we must wait for the Carnival,

\* Now Sir Horace Mann, and Envoy Extraordinary at the same court.

when

when all those things come of course. In the mean time it is impossible to want entertainment; the famous gallery, alone, is an amusement for months; we commonly pass two or three hours every morning in it, and one has perfect leisure to consider all its beauties. You know it contains many hundred antique statues, such as the whole world cannot match, besides the vast collections of paintings, medals, and precious stones, such as no other prince was ever master of; in short, all that the rich and powerful house of Medicis has in so many years got together.\* And besides this city abounds with so many places and churches, that you can hardly place yourself any where without having some fine one in view, or at least some statue or fountain, magnificently adorned; these, undoubtedly, are far more numerous than Genoa can pretend to; yet, in its general appearance, I cannot think that Florence equals it in beauty. Mr. Walpole is just come from being presented to the Electress Palatine Dowager; she is a sister of the late Great Duke's; a stately old lady, that never goes out but to church, and then she has guards, and eight horses to her coach. She received him with much ceremony, standing under a huge black canopy, and, after a few minutes talking, she assured him of her good will, and dismissed him: She never sees any body but thus in form; and so she passes her life, † poor woman! \*\*\*

\* He catalogued and made occasional short remarks on the pictures, &c. which he saw here, as well as at other places; many of which are in my possession, but it would have swelled this work too much if I had inserted them.

† Persons of very high rank, and withal very good sense, will only feel the pathos of this exclamation.

## L E T T E R XV.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WEST.

*Florence, Jan. 15, 1740.*

I Think I have not yet told you how we left that charming place Genoa: How we crossed a mountain, all of green marble, called Buchetto: How we came to Tortona, and waded through the mud to come to Castel St. Giovanni, and there eat mustard and sugar with a dish of crows gizzards: Secondly how we passed the famous plains

*Quà Trebie glaucas salices interfecat undâ  
Arvaque Romanis nobilitata malis.*

*Vifus adhuc amnis veteri de clade rubere,  
Et fufpirantes ducere mæftus aquas;*

*Maurorumque ala, & nigræ increbrefcere turmæ,  
Et pulfa Aufonidum ripa fonare fugâ.*

Nor, thirdly, how we passed through Piacenza, Parma, Modena, entered the territories of the Pope; stayed twelve days at Bologna; crossed the Appennines, and afterwards arrived at Florence. None of these things have I told you, nor do I intend to tell you, till you ask me some questions concerning them. No not even of Florence itself, except that it is as fine as possible, and has every thing in it that can blefs the eyes. But, before I enter into particulars, you must make your peace both with me and the Venus de Medicis, who, let me tell you, is highly and justly offended at you for not inquiring, long before this, concerning her symmetry and proportions. \* \* \*

L E T.

## LETTER XVI.

Mr. WEST to Mr. GRAY.

## ELEGIA.\*

**E**RGO desidiæ videor tibi crimine dignus ;  
 Et meritò : victas do tibi sponte manus.  
 Arguor & veteres nimium contemnere Musas,  
 Irata et nobis est Medicæa Venus.  
 Mene igitur statuas & inania saxa vereri !  
 Stultule ! marmoreâ quid mihi cum Venere ?  
 Hic veræ, hic vivæ Veneres, & mille per urbem,  
 Quarum nulla queat non placuisse Jovi.  
 Cedite Romanæ formosæ et cedite Graiæ,  
 Sintque oblita Helenæ nomen et Hermionæ !  
 Et, quascunque refert ætas vetus, Heroinæ :  
 Unus honor nostris jam venit Angliæ sin.  
 Oh quales vultus, Oh quantum numen ocellis !  
 I nunc & Tuscas improbe confer opes.  
 Ne tamen hæc obtusa nimis præcordia credas,  
 Neu me adeo nullâ Pallade progenitum:  
 Testor Pieridumque umbras & flumina Pindi  
 Me quoque Calliopes semper amasse choros ;  
 Et dudum Ausonias urbes, & visere Graias  
 Cura est, ingenio si licet ire meo :  
 Sive est Phidiacum marmor, seu Mentoris æra,  
 Seu paries Coe nobilis e calamo ;  
 Nec minus artificum magna argumenta recentum  
 Romanique decus nominis & Veneti :  
 Quæ Furor & Mayors & sævo in Marmore vultus,  
 Quaque et formoso mollior ære Venus.  
 Quaque loquax spirat fucus, vivique labores,

\* The letter which accompanied this little elegy is not extant. Probably it was only inclosed in one to Mr. Walpole.



Et quicquid calamo dulciùs ausa manus :  
 Hæc nemora, & sola mærens Melibæus in umbrâ,  
 Lymphaque muscofo profliens lapide ;  
 Illic majus opus, faciesque in pariete major  
 Exurgens, Divûm & numina Cœlicolûm ;  
 O vos sælices, quibus hæc cognoscere fas est,  
 Et totâ Italiâ, qua patet usque, frui !  
 Nulla dies vobis eat injucunda, nec usquam  
 Noritis quid sit tempora amara pati.

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## L E T T E R XVII.

Mr. GRAY .to his MOTHER.

*Florence, March 19, 1740.*

**T**HE Pope \* is at last dead, and we are to set out for Rome on Monday next. The Conclave is still sitting there, and likely to continue so some time longer, as the two French Cardinals are but just arrived, and the German ones are still expected. It agrees mighty ill with those that remain inclosed ; Ottoboni is already dead of an apoplexy ; Altieri and several others are said to be dying, or very bad : Yet it is not expected to break up till after Easter. We shall lie at Sienna the first night, spend a day there, and in two more get to Rome. One begins to see in this country the first promises of an Italian spring, clear unclouded skies, and warm suns, such as are not often felt in England ; yet, for your sake, I hope at present you have your proportion of them, and that all your frosts, and snows, and short-breaths are, by this time, utterly vanished. I have nothing new or par-

\* Clement the twelfth.

ticular to inform you of ; and, if you see things at home go on much in their old course, you must not imagine them more various abroad. The diversions of a Florentine Lent are composed of a sermon in the morning, full of hell and the devil ; a dinner at noon, full of fish and meager diet ; and, in the evening, what is called a *Conversazione*, a sort of assembly at the principal people's houses, full of I cannot tell what : Besides this, there is twice a week a very grand concert. \* \* \*

## L E T T E R XVIII.

Mr. GRAY to his MOTHER.

*Rome, April 2, N. S. 1740.*

**T**HIS is the third day since we came to Rome, but the first hour I have had to write to you in. The journey from Florence cost us four days, one of which was spent at Sienna, an agreeable, clean, old city, of no great magnificence, or extent ; but in a fine situation, and good air. What it has most considerable is its cathedral, a huge pile of marble, black and white laid alternately, and laboured with a gothic niceness and delicacy in the old-fashioned way. Within too are some paintings and sculpture of considerable hands. The sight of this, and some collections that were showed us in private houses, were a sufficient employment for the little time we were to pass there ; and the next morning we set forward on our journey through a country very oddly composed ; for some miles you have a continual scene of little mountains cultivated from top to bottom with rows of olive-trees, or else elms, each of which has its vine twining about it and mixing, with the branches ; and corn sown between all the ranks.

This diversified with numerous small houses and convents, makes the most agreeable prospect in the world : But all of a sudden, it alters to black barren hills, as far as the eye can reach, that seem never to have been capable of culture, and are as ugly as useless. Such is the country for some time before one comes to Mount Radicofani, a terrible black hill, on the top of which we were to lodge that night. It is very high, and difficult of ascent ; and at the foot of it we were much embarrassed by the fall of one of the poor horses that drew us. This accident obliged another chaise, which was coming down, to stop also ; and out of it peeped a figure in a red cloak, with a handkerchief tied round its head, which by its voice and mien, seemed a fat old woman ; but, upon its getting out, appeared to be Senesino, who was returning, from Naples to Siena, the place of his birth and residence. On the highest part of the mountain is an old fortress, and near it a house built by one of the Grand Dukes for a hunting-seat, but now converted into an inn : It is the shell of a large fabric, but such an inside, such chambers, and accommodations, that your cellar is a palace in comparison ; and your cat sups and lies much better than we did ; for, it being a saint's eve, there were nothing but eggs. We devoured our meager fare ; and, after stopping up the windows with the quilts, were obliged to lie upon straw beds in our clothes. Such are the conveniences in a road, that is, as it were, the great thoroughfare of all the world. Just on the other side of this mountain, at Ponte-Centino, one enters the patrimony of the church ; a most delicious country, but thinly inhabited. That night brought us to Viterbo, a city of a more lively appearance than any we had lately met with ; the houses have  
 glass

glass windows, which is not very usual here, and most of the streets are terminated by a handsome fountain. Here we had the pleasure of breaking our fast on the leg of an old hare and some broiled crows. Next morning, in descending Mount Viterbo, we first discovered (though at near thirty miles distance) the cupola of St. Peter's, and a little after began to enter on an old Roman pavement, with now and then a ruined tower, or a sepulchre on each hand. We now had a clear view of the city, though not to the best advantage, as coming along a plain quite upon a level with it; however, it appeared very vast, and surrounded with magnificent villas and gardens. We soon after crossed the Tiber, a river that ancient Rome made more considerable than any merit of its own could have done: However, it is not contemptibly small, but a good handsome stream; very deep, yet somewhat of a muddy complexion. The first entrance of Rome is prodigiously striking. It is by a noble gate, designed by Michel Angelo, and adorned with statues; this brings you into a large square, in the midst of which is a vast obelisk of granite, and in front you have at one view two churches of a handsome architecture, and so much alike that they are called the twins; with three streets, the middlemost of which is one of the longest in Rome. As high as my expectation was raised, I confess, the magnificence of this city infinitely surpasses it. You cannot pass along a street but you have views of some palace or church, or square, or fountain, the most picturesque and noble one can imagine. We have not yet set about considering its beauties, ancient and modern, with attention; but have already taken a slight transient view of some of the most remarkable. St. Peter's I saw the day after we arrived,



rived, and was struck dumb with wonder. I there saw the Cardinal d'Auvergne, one of the French ones, who, upon coming off his journey, immediately repaired hither to offer up his vows at the high altar, and went directly into the Conclave; the doors of which we saw opened to him,—and all the other immured Cardinals came hither to receive him. Upon his entrance they were closed again directly. It is supposed they will not come to an agreement about a Pope till after Easter, though the confinement is very disagreeable. I have hardly philosophy enough to see the infinity of fine things, that are here daily in the power of any body that has money, without regretting the want of it; but custom has the power of making things easy to one. I have not yet seen his majesty of Great-Britain, &c. though I have the two boys in the gardens of the Villa Borgeſe, where they go a-shooting almost every day; it was at a distance, indeed, for we did not choose to meet them, as you may imagine. This letter (like all those the English send, or receive) will pass through the hand of that family, before it comes to those it was intended for. They do it more honour than it deserves; and all they will learn from thence will be, that I desire you to give my duty to my father, and wherever else it is due, and that I am, &c.

L E T-

## L E T T E R XIX.

Mr. GRAY to his MOTHER.

*Rome, April 15, 1740. Good-Friday.*

**T**O-DAY I am just coming from paying my adoration at St. Peter's to three extraordinary reliques, which are exposed to public view only on these two days in the whole year, at which time all the confraternities in the city come in procession to see them. It was something extremely novel to see that vast church, and the most magnificent in the world, undoubtedly, illuminated (for it was night) by thousands of little crystal lamps, disposed in the figure of a huge cross at the high altar, and seeming to hang alone in the air. All the light proceeded from this, and had the most singular effect imaginable as one entered the great door. Soon after came one after another, I believe, thirty processions, all dressed in linen frocks, and girt with a cord, their heads covered with a cowl all over, only two holes to see through left. Some of them were all black, others red, others white, others party-coloured; these were continually coming and going with their tapers and crucifixes before them; and to each company, as they arrived and knelt before the great altar, were shown from a balcony at a great height the three wonders, which are, you must know, the head of the spear that wounded Christ; St. Veronica's handkerchief, with the miraculous impression of his face upon it; and a piece of the true cross, on the sight of which the people thump their breasts and kiss the pavement with vast devotion. The tragical part of the ceremony is half a dozen wretched creatures, who with their faces covered, but

naked to the waist, are in a side chapel disciplining themselves with scourges full of iron prickles; but really in earnest, as our eyes can testify, which saw their backs and arms so raw we should have taken it for a red sattin doublet torn, and shewing the skin through, had we not been convinced of the contrary by the blood which was plentifully sprinkled about them. It is late; I give you joy of Porto Bello, and many other things, which I hope are all true. \* \* \* \*

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L E T T E R XX.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WEST.

*Tivoli, May 20, 1740.*

**T**HIS day being in the palace of his Highness the Duke of Modena, he laid his most serene commands upon me to write to Mr. West, and said he thought it for his glory, that I should draw up an inventory of all his most serene possessions for the said West's perusal.—Imprimis, a house, being in circumference a quarter of a mile, two feet and an inch; the said house containing the following particulars, to wit, a great room. Item, another great room; item a bigger room; item another room; item a vast room; item a sixth of the same; a seventh ditto; an eighth as before; a ninth as abovesaid; a tenth (see No. 1); item, ten more such, besides twenty besides, which, not to be too particular, we shall pass over. The said rooms containing nine chairs, two tables, five stools, and a cricket. From whence we shall proceed to the garden, containing two millions of superfine laurel hedges, a clump of cypress trees, and half the river

river Teverone, that piffes into two thousand feveral chamber pots. Finis—Dame Nature desired me to put in a lift of her little goods and chattels, and, as they were small, to be very minute about them. She has built here three or four little mountains, and laid them out in an irregular semi-circle ; from certain others behind, at a greater diftance, ſhe has drawn a canal, into which ſhe has put a little river of her's called Anio ; ſhe has cut a huge cleft between the two innermoſt of her four hills, and there ſhe has left it to its own diſpoſal ; which ſhe has no ſooner done, but, like a heedleſs chit, it tumbles headlong down a declivity fifty feet perpendicular, breaks itſelf all to ſhatters, and is converted into a ſhower of rain, where the ſun forms many a bow, red, green, blue and yellow. To get out of our metaphors without any further trouble, it is the moſt noble ſight in the world. The weight of that quantity of waters, and the force they fall with, have worn the rocks they throw themſelves among into a thouſand irregular craggs, and to a vaſt depth. In this channel it goes boiling along with a mighty noiſe till it comes to another ſteep, where you ſee it a ſecond time come roaring down (but firſt you muſt walk two miles farther) a greater height than before, but not with that quantity of waters ; for by this time it has divided itſelf, being croſſed and oppoſed by the rocks, into four ſeveral ſtreams, each of which, in emulation of the great one, will tumble down too, and it does tumble down, but not from an equally elevated place ; ſo that you have at one view all theſe caſcades intermixed with groves of olive and little woods, the mountains riſing behind them, and on the top of one (that which forms the extremity of one of the half-circle's horns) is ſeated the town itſelf. At the very extremity of that extremity, on the brink of the precipice, ſtands the Sybilis



Sybils' temple, the remains of a little rotunda, surrounded with its portico, above half of whose beautiful Corinthian pillars are still standing and entire ; all this on one hand. On the other the open Campagna of Rome, here and there a little castle on a hillock, and the city itself on the very brink of the horizon, indistinctly seen (being eighteen miles off) except the dome of St. Peter's ; which, if you look out of your window, wherever you are, I suppose, you can see. I did not tell you that a little below the first fall, on the side of the rock, and hanging over that torrent, are little ruins which they show you for Horace's house, a curious situation to observe the

“ Præceps Anio, & Tiburni lucus, & uda

“ Mobilibus pomaria rivis.”

Mæcenæ did not care for such noise, it seems, and built him a house (which they also carry one to see) so situated that it sees nothing at all of the matter, and for any thing he knew there might be no such river in the world. Horace had another house on the other side of the Teverone, opposite to Mæcenæ's ; and they told us there was a bridge of communication, by which “ andava il detto Signor per trastullarsi coll istesso Orazio.” In coming hither we crossed the Aquæ Albulæ, a vile little brook that stinks like a fury, and they say it has stunk so these thousand years. I forgot the Piscina of Quintilius Varus, where he used to keep certain little fishes. This is very entire, and there is a piece of the aqueduct that supplied it too ; in the garden below is old Rome, built in little, just as it was, they say. There are seven temples in it, and no houses at all : They say there were none.

May

May 21.

We have had the pleasure of going twelve miles out of our way to Palestrina. It has rained all day as if heaven and us were coming together. See my honesty, I do not mention a syllable of the temple of Fortune, because I really did not see it; which, I think, is pretty well for an old traveller. So we returned along the Via Prænestina, saw the Lacus Gabinus and Regillus, where you know, Castor and Pollux appeared upon a certain occasion. And many a good old tomb we left on each hand, and many an Aqueduct,

Dumb are whose fountains, and their channels dry. There are, indeed, two whole modern ones, works of Popes, that run about thirty miles a-piece in length; one of them conveys still the famous Aqua Virgo to Rome, and adds vast beauty to the prospect. So we came to Rome again, where waited for us a splendissimo regalo of letters; in one of which came You, with your huge characters and wide intervals, staring. I would have you to know, I expect you should take a handsome crow-quill when you write to me, and not leave room for a pin's point in four sides of a sheet royal. Do you but find matter, I will find spectacles.

I have more time than I thought, and I will employ it in telling you about a Ball that we were at the other evening. Figure to yourself a Roman villa; all its little apartments thrown open, and lighted up to the best advantage. At the upper end of the gallery, a fine concert, in which La Diamantina, a famous virtuosa, played on the violin divinely, and sung angelically; Giovannino and Pasqualini (great names in musical story) also performed miraculously. On each side were ranged all the secular grand monde of Rome, the Ambassadors, Princesses, and  
all

all that. Among the rest Il Serenissimo Pretendente (as the Mantova gazette calls him) displayed his rueful length of person, with his two young ones, and all his ministry around him. "Poi naque un grazioso ballo," where the world danced, and I sat in a corner regaling myself with iced fruits, and other pleasant rinfrescatives.

## L E T T E R   X X I .

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WEST.

*Rome, May 1740.*

**M**ATER rofarum, cui teneræ vigent  
 Auræ Favonî, cui Venus it comes  
 Lasciva, Nympharum choreis  
 Et volucrum celebrata cantu !  
 Dic, non inertem fallere quâ diem  
 Amat sub umbrâ, seu finit aureum  
 Dormire plectrum, seu retentat  
 Pierio \* Zephyrinus antro  
 Furore dulci plenus, & immemor  
 Reptantis inter frigora Tusculi  
 Umbrosa, vel colles Amici  
 Palladiæ superantis Albæ.  
 Dilecta Fauno, & capripedum choris  
 Pineta, testor vos, Anio minax  
 Quæcunque per clivos volutus  
 Præcipiti tremefecit amne,  
 Illius altum Tibur, & Æsulæ  
 Audisse sylvas nomen amabiles,

\* He intitled this charming ode "Ad C. Favonium Zephyrinum," and writ it immediately after his journey to Frascati and the cascades of Tivoli, which he describes in the preceding letter.

Illius & gratas Latinis  
 Naias in ingeminasse rupes :  
 Nam me Latinæ Naiades uvidâ  
 Videre ripâ, quâ niveas levi  
 Tam sæpe lavit rore plumas  
 Dulcè canens Venusinus ales ;  
 Mirum ! canenti conticuit nemus,  
 Sacrique fontes, et retinent adhuc  
 (Sic Musa jussit) saxa molles  
 Docta modes, veteresque lauri.  
 Mirare nec tu me citharæ rudem  
 Claudis laborantem numeris : loca  
 Amæna, jucundumque ver in-  
 -compositum docuere carmen ;  
 Hærent sub omni nam folio nigri  
 Phœbea luci (credite) somnia,  
 Argutiisque et lympa et auræ  
 Nescio quid solito loquuntur.

I am to day just returned from Alba, a good deal  
 fatigued ; for you know the Appian is somewhat  
 tiresome. \* We dined at Pompey's ; he indeed was  
 gone for a few days to his Tusculan, but, by the  
 care of his Villicus, we made an admirable meal.  
 We had the dugs of a pregnant sow, a peacock, a  
 dish of thrushes, a noble scarus just fresh from the  
 Tyrrhene, and some conchylia of the Lake with

\* However whimsical this humour may appear to some  
 readers, I chose to insert it, as it gives me an opportunity of  
 remarking that Mr. Gray was extremely skilled in the cus-  
 toms of the ancient Romans ; and has catalogued, in his  
 commonplace book, their various eatables, wines, perfumes,  
 cloaths, medicines, &c. with great precision, referring under  
 every article to passages in the Poets and Historians where  
 their names are mentioned.



garum sauce : For my part I never eat better at Lucullus's table. We drank half a dozen cyathi a-piece of ancient Alban to Pholoë's health ; and, after bathing, and playing an hour at ball, we mounted our effedum again, and proceeded up the mount to the temple. The priests there entertained us with an account of a wonderful shower of birds eggs, that had fallen two days before, which had no sooner touched the ground, but they were converted into gudgeons ; as also that the night past a dreadful voice had been heard out of the Adytum, which spoke Greek during a full half hour, but no body understood it. But quitting my Romanities, to your great joy and mine, let me tell you, in plain English, that we come from Albano. The present town lies within the inclosure of Pompey's Villa in ruins. The Appian way runs through it, by the side of which, a little farther, is a large old tomb, with five pyramids upon it, which the learned suppose to be the burying-place of the family, because they do not know whose it can be else. But the vulgar assure you it is the sepulchre of the Curia-tii, and by that name (such is their power) it goes. One drives to Castel Gondolfo, a house of the Pope's, situated on the top of one of the Collinette, that forms a brim to the bason, commonly called the Alban lake. It is seven miles round ; and directly opposite to you, on the other side, rises the Mons Albanus, much taller than the rest, along whose side are still discoverable (not to common eyes) certain little ruins of the old Alba longa. They had need be very little, as having been nothing but ruins ever since the days of Tullius Hostilius. On its top is a house of the Constable Collonna's, where stood the temple of Jupiter Latialis. At the foot of the hill Gondolfo, are the famous outlets of the lake, built,  
with

with hewn stone, a mile and an half under ground. Livy, you know, amply informs us of the foolish occasion of this expence, and gives me this opportunity of displaying all my erudition, that I may appear considerable in your eyes. This is the prospect from one window of the palace. From another you have the whole Campagna, the City Antium, and the Tyrrhene sea (twelve miles distant) so distinguishable, that you may see the vessels sailing upon it. All this is charming. Mr. Walpole says, our memory sees more than our eyes in this country. Which is extremely true; since for realities, Windsor, or Richmond Hill, is infinitely preferable to Albano or Fregati. I am now at home, and going to the window to tell you it is the most beautiful of Italian nights, which, are but just begun (so backward has the spring been here, and every where else, they say). There is a moon! there are stars for you! Do not you hear the fountain? Do not you smell the orange flowers? That building yonder is the Convent of S. Isidore; and that eminence, with the cypress trees and pines upon it, the top of M. Quirinal. This is all true, and yet my prospect is not two hundred yards in length. We send you some Roman inscriptions to entertain you. The first two are modern, transcribed from the Vatican library by Mr. Walpole.

Pontifices olim quem fundavere priores,  
 Præcipuâ Sixtus perficit arte tholum; \*  
 Et Sixti tantum se gloria tollit in altum,  
 Quantum se Sixti nobile tollit opus:  
 Magnus honos magni fundamina ponere templi,  
 Sed finem cæptis ponere major honos.

\* Sixtus V. built the dome of St. Peter's.

Saxa agit Amphion, Thebana ut mœnia condat :  
 Sixtus & immensæ pondera molis agit. \*  
 Saxa trahunt ambo longè diversa : sed arte  
 Hæc trahit Amphion ; Sixtus & arte trahit.  
 At tantum exsuperat Dirceum Amphiona Sixtus,  
 Quantum hic exsuperat cætera saxa lapis.

Mine is ancient, and I think not less curious. It is exactly transcribed from a sepulchral marble at the villa Giustiniani. I put stops to it, when I understand it.

DIS Manibus  
 CLAUDIÆ, PISTES  
 PRIMUS CONJUGI  
 OPTIMÆ, SANCTÆ,  
 ET PIAE, BENEMERITÆ.

Non æquos, Parcae, statuistis stamina vitæ.  
 Tam bene compositos potuistis sede tenere,  
 Amissa est conjux, cur ego & ipse moror ?  
 Si bella esse mihi iste mea vivere debuit.  
 Tristitia contigerunt qui amissâ conjuge vivo.  
 Nil est tam miserum, quam totam perdere vitam.  
 Nec vita enasci dura peregistis crudelia pensa, sorores,  
 Ruptaque deficiunt in primo munere fusi.  
 O nimis injustæ ter denos dare munus in annos,  
 Deceptus grautus fatum sic pressit egestas.  
 Dum vitam tulero, Primus Pistes lucea conjugium.

\* He raised the obelisk in the great area.

L E T.

## L E T T E R XXII.

Mr. GRAY to his MOTHER.

*Naples, June 17, 1740.*

OUR journey hither was through the most beautiful part of the finest country in the world; and every spot of it, on some account or other, famous for these three thousand years past\*. The season has hitherto been just as warm as one would wish it; no unwholesome airs, or violent heats, yet heard of: The people call it a backward year, and are in pain about their corn, wine, and oil; but we who are neither corn, wine, nor oil, find it very agreeable. Our road was through Velletri, Cisterna, Terracina, Capua, and Aversa, and so to Naples. The minute one leaves his Holiness's dominions, the face of things begins to change from wide uncultivated plains to olive groves and well-tilled fields of corn, intermixed with ranks of elms, every one of which has its vine twining about it, and hanging in festoons between the rows from one tree to another. The great old fig-trees, the oranges in full bloom, and myrtles in every hedge, make one of the delightfulest scenes you can conceive; besides that, the roads are wide, well-kept, and full of passen-

\* Mr. Gray writ a minute description of every thing he saw in this tour from Rome to Naples; as also of the environs of Rome, Florence, &c. But as these papers are apparently only memorandums for his own use, I do not think it necessary to print them, although they abound with many uncommon remarks, and pertinent classical quotations. The reader will please to observe throughout this section, that it is not my intention to give him Mr. Gray's Travels, but only extracts from the Letters which he writ during his travels.



gers, a sight I have not beheld this long time. My wonder still increased upon entering the city, which I think, for number of people, outdoes both Paris and London. The streets are one continued market, and thronged with populace so much that a coach can hardly pass. The common sort are a jolly lively kind of animals, more industrious than Italians usually are; they work till evening; then they take their lute or guitar (for they all play) and walk about the city, or upon the sea-shore with it, to enjoy the fresco. One sees their little brown children jumping about stark-naked, and the bigger ones dancing with castanets, while others play on the cymbal to them. Your maps will show you the situation of Naples; it is on the most lovely bay in the world, and one of the calmest seas: It has many other beauties besides those of Nature. We have spent two days in visiting the remarkable places in the country round it, such as the bay of Baiæ, and its remains of antiquity; the lake Avernus, and the Solfatara, Charon's grotto, &c. We have been in the Sybils' cave and many other strange holes underground (I only name them, because you may consult Sandys's travels); but the strangest hole I ever was in, has been to-day at a place called Portici, where his Sicilian Majesty has a country-seat. About a year ago, as they were digging, they discovered some parts of ancient buildings about thirty feet deep in the ground: Curiosity led them on, and they have been digging ever since; the passage they have made, with all its turnings and windings, is now more than a mile long. As you walk, you see parts of an amphitheatre, many houses adorned with marble columns, and incrusted with the same; the front of a temple, several arched vaults of rooms painted in fresco. Some pieces of painting have been

been taken out from hence, finer than any thing of the kind before discovered, and with these the King has adorned his palace ; also a number of statues, medals, and gems ; and more are dug out every day. This is known to be a Roman town\*, that in the Emperor Titus's time was overwhelmed by a furious eruption of Mount Vesuvius, which is hard by. The wood and beams remain so perfect that you may see the grain ; but burnt to a coal, and dropping into dust upon the least touch. We were to-day at the foot of that mountain, which at present only smokes a little, where we saw the materials that fed the stream of fire, which about four years since ran down its side. We have but a few days longer to stay here ; too little in conscience for such a place. \* \* \*

# L E T T E R XXIII.

Mr. GRAY to his FATHER.

*Florence, July 16, 1740.*

AT my return to this city, the day before yesterday, I had the pleasure of finding yours dated June the 9th. The period of our voyages, at least towards the south, is come, as you wish. We have been at Naples, spent nine or ten days there, and returned to Rome, where finding no likelihood of a Pope yet these three months, and quite wearied with the formal assemblies, and little society of that great city, Mr. Walpole determined to return hither to spend the summer, where he imagines he

\* It should seem by the omission of its name, that it was not then discovered to be Herculaneum.

shall

shall pass his time more agreeably than in the tedious expectation of what, when it happens, will only be a great show. For my own part, I give up the thoughts of all that with but little regret ; but the city itself I do not part with so easily, which alone has amusements for whole years. However, I have passed through all that most people do, both ancient and modern ; what that is you may see, better than I can tell you, in a thousand books. The Conclave we left in greater uncertainty than ever ; the more than ordinary liberty they enjoy there, and the usual coolness of the season, makes the confinement less disagreeable to them than common, and, consequently, maintains them in their irresolution. There have been very high words, one or two (it is said) have come even to blows ; two more are dead within this last month, Cenci and Portia ; the latter died distracted ; and we left another (Altieri) at the extremity : Yet nobody dreams of an election till the latter end of September. All this gives great scandal to all good catholics, and every body talks very freely on the subject. The Pretender (whom you desire an account of) I have had frequent opportunities of seeing at church, at the corso, and other places ; but more particularly, and that for a whole night, at a great ball given by Count Patrizii to the Prince and Princess Craon, (who were come to Rome at that time, that he might receive from the hands of the Emperor's minister there the order of the golden fleece) at which time he and his two sons were present. They are good fine boys, especially the younger, who has the more spirit of the two, and both danced incessantly all night long. For him he is a thin ill-made man, extremely tall and awkward, of a most unpromising countenance, a good deal resembling King James the Second, and has extremely  
the

the air and look of an idiot, particularly when he laughs or prays. The first he does not often, the latter continually. He lives private enough with his little court about him, consisting of Lord Dunbar, who manages every thing, and two or three of the Preston Scotch Lords, who would be very glad to make their peace at home.

We happened to be at Naples on Corpus Christi Day, the greatest feast in the year, so had an opportunity of seeing their Sicilian Majesties to advantage. The King walked in the grand procession, and the Queen (being big with child) sat in a balcony. He followed the Host to the church of St. Clara, where high mass was celebrated to a glorious concert of music. They are as ugly a little pair as one can see: She a pale girl, marked with the small-pox; and he a brown boy with a thin face, a huge nose, and as ungainly as possible.

We are settled here with Mr. Mann in a charming apartment: the river Arno runs under our windows, which we can fish out of. The sky is so serene, and the air so temperate, that one continues in the open air all night long in a slight nightgown without any danger; and the marble bridge is the resort of every body, where they hear music, eat iced fruits, and sup by moon-light; though as yet (the season being extremely backward every where) these amusements are not begun. You see we are now coming northward again, though in no great haste; the Venetian and Milanese territories, and either Germany or the South of France (according to the turn the war may take) are all that remain for us, that we have not yet seen; as to Loretto and that part of Italy, we have given over all thoughts of it.

L E T-



## L E T T E R XXIV.

Mr. WEST to Mr. GRAY.

*Bond-street, June 5, 1740.*

I Lived at the Temple till I was sick of it : I have just left it, and find myself as much a lawyer as I was when I was in it. It is certain, at least, I may study the law here as well as I could there. My being in chambers did not signify to me a pinch of snuff. They tell me my father was a lawyer, and, as you know, eminent in the profession ; and such a circumstance must be of advantage to me. My uncle too makes some figure in Westminster hall ; and there's another advantage : Then my grandfather's name would get me many friends. Is it not strange that a young fellow, that might enter the world with so many advantages, will not know his own interest ? &c. &c.—What shall I say in answer to all this ? For money, I neither doat upon it nor despise it ; it is a necessary stuff enough. For ambition, I do not want that neither ; but it is not to sit upon a bench. In short, is it not a disagreeable thing to force one's inclination, especially when one's young ? not to mention that one ought to have the strength of a Hercules to go through our common law ; which, I am afraid, I have not. Well ! but then, say they, if one profession does not suit you, you may choose another more to your inclination. Now I protest I do not yet know my own inclination, and I believe, if that was to be my direction, I should never fix at all : There is no going by a weathercock. I could say much more upon this subject ; but there is no talking tête-à-tête cross the Alps. O the folly of young men, that never know  
their

their own interest! they never grow wise till they are ruined! and then nobody pities them, nor helps them. Dear Gray! consider me in the condition of one that has lived these two years without any person that he can freely speak to. I know it is very seldom that people trouble themselves with the sentiments of those they converse with; so they can chat about trifles, they never care whether your heart aches or no. Are you one of these? I think not. But what right have I to ask you this question? Have we known one another enough, that I should expect or demand sincerity from you? Yes, Gray, I hope we have; and I have not quite such a mean opinion of myself, as to think I do not deserve it.—But, Signor, is it not time for me to ask something about your further intentions abroad? Where do you propose going next? an in Apuliam? nam illò si adveneris, tanquam Ulysses, cognosces tuorum neminem. Vale. So Cicero prophesies in the end of one of his letters\*—and there I end.

Yours, &c.

## L E T T E R XXV.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WEST.

*Florence, July 16, 1740.*

**Y**OU do yourself and me justice, in imagining that you merit, and that I am capable of sincerity. I have not a thought, or even a weakness,  
 VOL. I. E I desire

\* This letter (written apparently in much agitation of mind, which Mr. West endeavours to conceal by an unusual carelessness of manner) is chiefly inserted to introduce the answer

I desire to conceal from you ; and consequently on my side deserve to be treated with the same openness of heart. My vanity perhaps might make me more reserved towards you, if you were one of the heroic race, superior to all human failings ; but as mutual wants are the ties of general society, so are mutual weaknesses of private friendships, supposing them mixt with some proportion of good qualities ; for where one may not sometimes blame, one does not much care ever to praise. All this has the air of an introduction designed to soften a very harsh reproof that is to follow ; but it is no such matter : I only meant to ask, Why did you change your lodging ? Was the air bad, or the situation melancholy ? If so, you are quite right. Only, is it not putting yourself a little out of the way of a people, with whom it seems necessary to keep up some sort of intercourse and conversation, though but little for your pleasure or entertainment, (yet there are, I believe, such among them as might give you both) at least for your information in that study, which, when I left you, you thought of applying to ? for that there is a certain study necessary to be followed, if we mean to be of any use in the world, I take for granted ; disagreeable enough (as most necessities are) but, I am afraid, unavoidable. - Into how many branches these studies are divided in England, every body knows ; and between that which you and I had pitched upon, and the other two, it was impossible to balance long. Examples shew one that it is not absolutely necessary to be a blockhead to

answer to it ; which appears to me to be replete with delicate feeling, manly sense, and epistolary ease. If the reader should think as highly of it as I do, let me remind him that the writer was not now quite four and twenty years old.

succeed

succeed in this profession. The labour is long, and the elements dry and unentertaining ; nor was ever any body (especially those that afterwards made a figure in it) amused, or even not disgusted in the beginning ; yet, upon a further acquaintance, there is surely matter for curiosity and reflection. It is strange if, among all that huge mass of words, there be not somewhat intermixed for thought. Laws have been the result of long deliberation, and that not of dull men, but the contrary ; and have so close a connection with history, nay, with philosophy itself, that they must partake a little of what they are related to so nearly. Besides, tell me, Have you ever made the attempt ? Was not you frightened merely with the distant prospect ? Had the Gothic character and bulkiness of those volumes (a tenth part of which it will be no further necessary to consult, than as one does a dictionary) no ill effect upon your eye ? Are you sure, if Coke had been printed by Elzevir, and bound in twenty neat pocket volumes, instead of one folio, you should never have taken him up for an hour, as you would a Tully, or drank your tea over him ? I know how great an obstacle ill spirits are to resolution. Do you really think, if you rid ten miles every morning, in a weeks time you should not entertain much stronger hopes of the Chancellorship, and think it a much more probable thing than you do at present ? The advantages you mention are not nothing ; our inclinations are more than we imagine in our own power ; reason and resolution determine them, and support under many difficulties. To me there hardly appears to be any medium between a public life and a private one ; he who prefers the first, must put himself in a way of being serviceable to the rest of mankind, if he has a mind to be of any consequence among them : Nay, he



must not refuse being in a certain degree even dependent upon some men who already are so. If he has the good fortune to light on such as will make no ill use of his humility, there is no shame in this : If not, his ambition ought to give place to a reasonable pride, and he should apply to the cultivation of his own mind those abilities which he has not been permitted to use for others' service. Such a private happiness (supposing a small competence of fortune) is almost always in one's power, and the proper enjoyment of age, as the other is the employment of youth. You are yet young, have some advantages and opportunities, and an undoubted capacity, which you have never yet put to the trial. Set apart a few hours, see how the first year will agree with you, at the end of it you are still the master ; if you change your mind, you will only have got the knowledge of a little somewhat that can do no hurt, or give you cause of repentance. If your inclinations be not fixed upon any thing else, it is a symptom that you are not absolutely determined against this, and warns you not to mistake mere indolence for inability. I am sensible there is nothing stronger against what I would persuade you to, than my own practice ; which may make you imagine I think not as I speak. Alas ! it is not so ; but I do not act what I think, and I had rather be the object of your pity, than that you should be that of mine ; and, be assured, the advantage I may receive from it, does not diminish my concern in hearing you want somebody to converse with freely, whose advice might be of more weight, and always at hand. We have some time since come to the southern period of our voyages ; we spent about nine days at Naples. It is the largest and most populous city, as its environs are the most deliciously fertile country, of all Italy.

We

We sailed in the bay of Baiæ, sweated in the Solfatara, and died in the grotto del Cane, as all strangers do : saw the Corpus Christi procession, and the King and the Queen, and the city under-ground, (which is a wonder I reserve to tell you of another time) and so returned to Rome for another fortnight ; left it (left Rome !) and came hither for the summer. You have seen \* an Epistle to Mr. Ashton, that seems to me full of spirit and thought, and a good deal of poetic fire. I would know your opinion. Now I talk of verses, Mr. Walpole and I have frequently wondered you should never mention a certain imitation of Spencer, published last year by a † namesake of yours, with which we are all enraptured and enraptured.

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## LETTER XXVI.

Mr. GRAY to his MOTHER.

*Florence, Aug. 21, N. S. 1740.*

**I**T is some time since I have had the pleasure of writing to you, having been upon a little excursion cross the mountains to Bologna. We set out from hence at sunset, passed the Apennines by moon-light, travelling incessantly till we came to Bologna at four in the afternoon next day. There we spent a week agreeably enough, and returned as we came. The day before yesterday arrived the news of a Pope ; and I have the mortification of

\* The reader will find this in Doddsley's Miscellany, and also amongst Mr. Walpole's Fugitive Pieces.

† Gilbert West, Esq; This poem "On the abuse of Travelling" is also in Doddsley's Miscellany.

being within four days journey of Rome, and not seeing his coronation, the heats being violent, and the infectious air now at its height. We had an instance, the other day, that it is not only fancy. Two country fellows, strong men, and used to the country about Rome, having occasion to come from thence hither, and travelling on foot, as common with them, one died suddenly on the road; the other got hither, but extremely weak, and in a manner stupid; he was carried to the hospital, but died in two days. So, between fear and laziness, we remain here, and must be satisfied with the accounts other people give us of the matter. The new Pope is called Benedict XIV. being created Cardinal by Benedict XIII. the last Pope but one. His name is Lambertini, a noble Bolognese, and archbishop of that city. When I was first there, I remember to have seen him two or three times; he is a short, fat man, about sixty-five years of age, of a hearty, merry countenance, and likely to live some years. He bears a good character for generosity, affability, and other virtues; and, they say, wants neither knowledge nor capacity. The worst side of him is, that he has a nephew or two; besides a certain young favorite, called Melara, who is said to have had, for some time, the arbitrary disposal of his purse and family. He is reported to have made a little speech to the Cardinals in the Conclave, while they were undetermined about an election, as follows: "Most eminent Lords here are three Bolognese of different characters, but all equally proper for the popedom. If it be your pleasures, to pitch upon a saint, there is Cardinal Gotti; if upon a Politician, there is Aldrovandi; if upon a Booby, here am I." The Italian is much more expressive, and, indeed, not to be translated; wherefore

wherefore, if you meet with any body that understands it, you may show them what he said in the language he spoke it. “Emin<sup>ssimi</sup>. Signori. Oî siamo tré, diversi sì, mà tutti idonei al Papato. Se vi piace un Santo, c’è l’Gotti; se volete una testa scaltra, e Politica, c’è l’Aldrovandé; se un Coglione, eccomi!” Cardinal Coscia is restored to his liberty, and, it is said, will be to all his benefices. Corsini (the late Pope’s nephew) as he has no hand in this election, it is hoped, will be called to account for all his villainous practices. The pretender, they say, has resigned all his pretensions to his eldest boy, and will accept of the Grand Chancellorship, which is thirty thousand crowns a-year; the pension he has at present is only twenty thousand. I do not affirm the truth of this last article; because, if he does, it is necessary he should take the ecclesiastical habit, and it will sound mighty odd to be called his Majesty the Chancellor.—So ends my Gazette.

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## LETTER XXVII.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WEST.

*Florence, Sept. 25, N. S. 1740.*

**W**HAT I send you now, as long as it is, is but a piece of a poem. It has the advantage of all fragments, to need neither introduction nor conclusion: Besides, if you do not like it, it is but imagining that which went before, and came after, to be infinitely better. Look in Sandys’s tra-



vels for the history of Monte Barbaro, and Monte Nuovo. \*

\* \* \* \* \*

Nec procul infelix se tollit in æthera Gaurus,  
 Prospiciens vitreum lugenti vertice pontum :  
 Tristior ille diu, & veteri defuetus olivâ  
 Gaurus, pampineæque cheu jam nescius umbræ ;  
 Horrendi tam sæva premit vicinia montis,  
 Attonitumque urget latus, exuritque ferentem.

Nam

\* To save the reader trouble, I here insert the passage referred to.—“ West of Cicero’s Villa stands the eminent Gaurus, a stony and desolate mountain, in which there are diverse obscure caverns, choaked almost with earth, where many have consumed much fruitless industry in searching for treasure. The famous Lucrine Lake extended formerly from Avernus to the aforesaid Gaurus: But is now no other than a little sedgy plash, choaked up by the horrible and astonishing eruption of the new mountain; whereof, as oft as I think, I am easy to credit whatsoever is wonderful. For who here knows not, or who elsewhere will believe, that a mountain should arise, (partly out of a lake and partly out of the sea) in one day and a night, unto such a height as to contend in altitude with the high mountains adjoining? In the year of our Lord 1538, on the 29th of September, when for certain days foregoing the country hereabout was so vexed with perpetual earthquakes, as no one house was left so entire as not to expect an immediate ruin; after that the sea had retired two hundred paces from the shore, (leaving abundance of fish, and springs of fresh water rising in the bottom) this mountain visibly ascended, about the second hour of the night, with an hideous roaring, horribly vomiting stones and such store of cinders as overwhelmed all the buildings thereabout, and the salubrious baths of Tripergula, for so many ages celebrated; consumed the vines to ashes, killing birds and beasts: the fearful inhabitants of Puzzol flying through  
 the

Nam fama est olim, mediâ dum rura filebant  
 Nocte, Deo victa, & molli perfusa quiete,  
 Infremuisse æquor ponti, auditamque per omnes  
 Latè tellurem surdùm immugire cavernas:  
 Quo sonitu nemora alta tremunt; tremit excita tuto  
 Parthenopœa sinu, flammantisque ora Vesevi.  
 At subito se aperire solum, vastosque recessus  
 Pandere sub pedibus, nigrâque voragine fauces;  
 Tum piceas cinerum glomerare sub æthere nubes.  
 Vorticibus rapidis, ardentique imbre procellam.  
 Præcipites fugere feræ, perque avia longè  
 Sylvarum fugit pastor, juga per deserta,  
 Ah, miser! increpitans sæpè altâ voce per umbram  
 Nequicquam natos, creditque audire sequentes.  
 Atque ille excelsò rupis de vertice solus  
 Respectans notasque domos, & dulcia regna,  
 Nil usquàm videt infelix præter mare tristi  
 Lumine percussum, & pallentes sulphure campos,  
 Fumumque, flammæque, rotataque turbine saxa.

Quin ubi detonuit fragor, & lux reddita cœlo;  
 Mæltos confluere agricolas, passuque videres  
 Tandem iterum timido deserta requirere tecta:  
 Sperantes, si forte oculis, si forte carentur  
 Uxorum cineres, miseror umve ossa parentum,  
 (Tenuia, sed tanti saltem solatia luctus)

the dark with their wives and children; naked, defiled, crying out, and detesting their calamities. Manifest mischiefs have they suffered by the barbarous, yet none like this which Nature inflicted.—This new mountain, when newly raised, had a number of issues; at some of them smoaking and flaming; and others disgorging rivulets of hot waters; keeping within a terrible rumbling; and many miserably perished that ventured to descend into the hollowneis above. But that hollow on the top is at present an orchard, and the mountain throughout is bereft of his terrors."

*Sandys's Travels, book 4, page 275, 277, and 278.*

Unâ colligere & justâ componere in urnâ;  
 Uxorum nusquam cineres, nusquam ossa patentum  
 (Spem miseram!) assuetosve Lares, aut rura videbunt.  
 Quippe ubi planities campi diffusa jacebat;  
 Mons novus: ille supercilium, frontemque favillâ  
 Incanum ostentans, ambustis cautibus, æquor  
 Subiectum, stragemque suam, mæsta arva, minaci  
 Despicit imperio, soloque in littore regnat.

Hinc infame loci nomen, multosque per annos.  
 Immemor antiquæ laudis, nescire labores  
 Vomeris, & nullo tellus revirescere cultu.  
 Non avium colles, non carmine matutino  
 Pastorum resonare; adeo undique dirus habebat  
 Informes latè horror agros saltusque vacantes.  
 Sæpius et longè detorquens navita proram  
 Monstrabat digito littus, sævæque revolvens  
 Funera narrabat noctis, veteremque ruinam.

Montis adhuc facies manet hirta atque aspera saxis;  
 Sed furor extinctus jamdudum, & flamma quievit,  
 Quæ nascenti aderat; seu fortè bituminis attri  
 Defluxere olim rivi, atque effœta lacuna  
 Pabula sufficere ardori, viresque recusat;  
 Sive in visceribus meditans incendia jam nunc  
 (Horrendum) arcanis glomerat genti esse futuræ  
 Exitio, sparsos tacitusque recolligit ignes.

Raro per clivos haud secius ordine vidi  
 Canescentem oleam: longum post tempus amicti  
 Vite virent tumuli; patriamque revisere gaudens  
 Bacchus in assuetis tenerum caput exerit arvis  
 Vix tandem, infidoque audet se credere cœlo.

There was a certain little ode \* set out from  
 Rome, in a letter of recommendation to you, but

\* The Alcaic Ode inserted in Letter XXI.

possibly

possibly fell into the enemies' hands, for I never heard of its arrival. It is a little impertinent to inquire after its welfare ; but you, that are a father, will excuse a parent's foolish fondness. Last post I received a very diminutive letter : It made excuses for its unentertainingness, very little to the purpose ; since it assured me, very strongly, of your esteem, which is to me the thing ; all the rest appear but as the *petits agrémens*, the garnishing of the dish. P. Bougeant, in his *Langage des Bêtes*, fancies that your birds, who continually repeat the same note, say only in plain terms, " Je vous aime, ma chere ; ma chere, je vous aime ;" and that those of greater genius indeed, with various trills, run divisions upon the subject ; but that the *fond*, from whence it all proceeds, is " toujours je vous aime." Now you may, as you find yourself dull or in humour, either take me for a chaffinch or nightingale ; sing your plain song, or show your skill in music, but in the bottom let there be, toujours, toujours de l'Amitié.

As to what you call my serious letter ; be assured, that your future estate is to me entirely indifferent. Do not be angry, but hear me ; I mean with respect to myself. For whether you be at the top of Fame, or entirely unknown to mankind ; at the Council-table, or at Dick's coffee-house ; sick and simple, or well and wise ; whatever alteration mere accident works in you, (supposing it utterly impossible for it to make any change in your sincerity and honesty, since these are conditions *sine quâ non*) I do not see any likelihood of my not being yours ever.

L E T



## L E T T E R XXVIII.

Mr. GRAY to his FATHER.

*Florence, Oct. 9, 1740.*

THE beginning of next spring is the time determined for our return at furthest; possibly it may be before that time. How the interim will be employed, or what route we shall take, is not so certain. If we remain friends with France, upon leaving this country we shall cross over to Venice, and so return through the cities north of the Po to Genoa; from thence take a felucca to Marseilles, and come back through Paris. If the contrary fall out, which seems not unlikely, we must make the Milanese, and those parts of Italy, in our way to Venice; from thence pass through the Tirol into Germany, and come home by the Low-Countries. As for Florence, it has been gayer than ordinary for this last month, being one round of balls and entertainments, occasioned by the arrival of a great Milanese Lady; for the only thing the Italians shine in, is their reception of strangers. At such times every thing is magnificence: The more remarkable, as in their ordinary course of life they are parsimonious, even to a degree of nastiness. I saw in one of the vastest palaces in Rome (that of Prince Pamfilio) the apartment which he himself inhabited, a bed that most servants in England would disdain to lie in, and furniture much like that of a soph at Cambridge, for convenience and neatness. This man is worth 30,000*l.* sterling a year. As for eating, there are not two Cardinals in Rome that allow more than six paoli, which is three shillings a day, for the expence of their table; and  
you

you may imagine they are still less extravagant here than there. But when they receive a visit from any friend, their houses and persons are set out to the greatest advantage, and appear in all their splendour; it is, indeed, from a motive of vanity, and with the hopes of having it repaid them with interest, whenever they have occasion to return the visit. The new Pope has retrenched the charges of his own table to a sequin (10s) a meal. The applause which all he says and does meets with, is enough to encourage him really to deserve fame. They say he is an able and honest man; he is reckoned a wit too. The other day, when the Senator of Rome came to wait upon him, at the first compliments he made him the Pope pulled off his cap: His master of the Ceremonies, stood by his side, touched him softly, as to warn him that such a condescension was too great in him, and out of all manner of rule: Upon which he turned to him and said, "Oh! I cry you mercy, good Master, it is true, I am but a Novice of a Pope; I have not yet so much as learned ill manners." \* \* \*

## L E T T E R XXIX.

Mr. GRAY to his FATHER.

*Florence, \* Jan. 12, 1741.*

WE still continue constant at Florence, at present one of the dullest cities in Italy. Though it is the middle of the Carnival there are no

\* Between the date of this and the foregoing letter the reader will perceive an interval of full three months: as Mr. Gray saw no new places during this period, his letters were chiefly of news and common occurrences, and are therefore omitted.

public diversions; nor is masquerading permitted as yet. The Emperor's obsequies are to be celebrated publicly the 16th of this month; and after that, it is imagined every thing will go on in its usual course. In the mean time, to employ the minds of the populace, the Government has thought fit to bring into the city in a solemn manner, and at a great expence, a famous statue of the Virgin called the Madonna dell'Impruneta, from the place of her residence, which is upon a mountain seven miles off. It never has been practised but at times of public calamity; and was done at present to avert the ill effects of a late great inundation, which it was feared might cause some epidemical distemper. It was introduced a fortnight ago in procession, attended by the Council of Regency, the Senate, the Nobility, and all the Religious Orders, on foot and bare-headed, and so carried to the great church, where it was frequented by an infinite concourse of people from all the country round. Among the rest I paid my devotions almost every day, and saw numbers of people possessed with the devil, who were brought to be exorcised. It was indeed in the evening, and the church-doors were always shut before the ceremonies were finished, so that I could not be eye-witness of the event; but that they were all cured is certain, for one never heard any more of them the next morning. I am to-night just returned from seeing our Lady make her exit with the same solemnities she entered. The show had a finer effect than before, for it was dark; and every body (even those of the mob that could afford it) bore a white-wax flambeau. I believe there were at least five thousand of them, and the march was near three hours in passing before the window. The subject of all this devotion is supposed to be a large Tile with a rude figure in bas-relief upon it. I say  
supposed,

supposed, because since the time it was found (for it was found in the earth in ploughing) only two people have seen it; the one was, by good-luck, a saint; the other was struck blind for his presumption. Ever since she has been covered with seven veils; nevertheless, those who approach her tabernacle cast their eyes down for fear they should spy her through all her veils. Such is the history, as I had it from the lady of the house where I stood to see her pass; with many other circumstances; all which she firmly believes, and ten thousand beside.

We shall go to Venice in about six weeks, or sooner. A number of German troops are upon their march into this State, in case the King of Naples thinks proper to attack it. It is certain he has asked the Pope's leave for his troops to pass through his country. The Tuscans in general are much discontented, and foolish enough to wish for a Spanish government, or any rather than this. \* \* \* \*

## L E T T E R   XXX.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WEST.

*Florence, April 21, 1741.*

I Know not what degree of satisfaction it will give you to be told that we shall set out from hence the 24th of this month, and not stop above a fortnight at any place in our way. This I feel, that you are the principal pleasure I have to hope for in my own country. Try at least to make me imagine myself not indifferent to you; for I must own I have the vanity of desiring to be esteemed by somebody, and would choose that somebody should be one whom I esteem



esteem as much as I do you. As I am recommending myself to your love, methinks I ought to send you my picture (for I am no more what I was, some circumstances excepted, which I hope I need not particularize to you); you must add then to your former idea, two years of age, a reasonable quantity of dulness, a great deal of silence, and something that rather resembles, than is, thinking; a confused notion of many strange and fine things that have swum before my eyes for some time, a want of love for general society, indeed an inability to it. On the good side you may add a sensibility for what others feel, and indulgence for their faults or weaknesses, a love of truth and detestation of every thing else. Then you are to deduct a little impertinence, a little laughter, a great deal of pride, and some spirits. These are all the alterations I know of, you perhaps may find more. Think not that I have been obliged for this reformation of manners to reason or reflection, but to a severer school-mistress, Experience. One has little merit in learning her lessons, for one cannot well help it; but they are more useful than others, and imprint themselves in the very heart. I find I have been haranguing in the style of the Son of Sirach, so shall finish here, and tell you that our route is settled as follows: First to Bologna for a few days, to hear the Viscontina sing; next to Reggio, where is a Fair. Now, you must know, a Fair here is not a place where one eats gingerbread or rides upon hobby-horses; here are no musical clocks, nor tall Leicestershire women; one has nothing but masking, gaming, and singing. If you love operas, there will be the most splendid in Italy, four tip-top voices, a new theatre, the Duke and Dutchess in all their pomps and vanities. Does not this sound magnificent? Yet is the city

city of Reggio but one step above Old Brentford. Well ; next to Venice by the 11th of May, there to see the old Doge wed the Adriatic Whore. Then to Verona, so to Milan, so to Marseilles, so to Lyons, so to Paris, so to West, &c. in sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

Eleven months, at different times, have I passed at Florence ; and yet (God help me) know not either people or language. Yet the place and the charming prospects demand a poetical farewell, and here it is.

\* \* Oh Fæsulæ amæna

Frigoribus juga, nec nimium spirantibus auris !  
Alma quibus Tusci Pallas decus Apennini  
Esse dedit, glaucæque suâ canescere sylvâ !  
Non ego vos posthac Arni de valle videbo  
Porticibus circum, & candenti cincta coronâ  
Villarum longè nitido consurgere dorso,  
Antiquamve Ædem, & veteres præferre Cupressus  
Mirabor, testisque super pendentia tecta.

I will send you, too, a pretty little Sonnet of a Sig. Abbate Buondelmonte, with my imitation of it.

Spesso Amor sotto la forma  
D'amistà ride, e s'asconde :  
Poi si mischia, e si confonde  
Con lo sdegno, e col rancor.  
In Pietade ei si trasforma ;  
Par trastullo, e par dispetto :  
Mà nel suo diverso aspetto  
Sempr'egli, è l'istesso Amor.

Lusit amicitia interdum velatus amictu,  
Et benè compositâ veste sefellit Amor.

Mox

Mox iræ assumfit cultus, faciemque minantem,  
 Inque odium versus, versus & in lacrymas :  
 Ludentem fuge, nec lacrymanti, aut crede furenti ;  
 Idem est dissimili semper in ore Deus.

Here comes a letter from you.—I must defer giving my opinion of \* Pausanias till I can see the whole, and only have said what I did in obedience to your commands. I have spoken with such freedom on this head, that it seems but just you should have your revenge ; and therefore I send you the beginning not of an Epic Poem, but of a † Metaphysic one. Poems and Metaphysics (say you, with your spectacles on) are inconsistent things. A metaphysical poem is a contradiction in terms. It is true, but I will go on. It is Latin too to increase the absurdity. It will, I suppose, put you in mind of the man who wrote a treatise of Canon Law in Hexameters. Pray help me to the description of a mixt mode, and a little Episode about Space.

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Mr Walpole and Mr. Gray set out from Florence at the time specified in the foregoing Letter. When Mr. Gray left Venice, which he did the middle of July following, he returned home through Padua,

\* Some part of a Tragedy under that title, which Mr. Wolt had begun ; but I do not find amongst Mr. Gray's papers either the sketch itself, or Mr. Gray's free critique upon it, which he here mentions.

† The beginning of the first book of a didactic Poem, "De Principiis Cogitandi." The fragment which he now sent contained the first 53 lines. The reader will find a further account of his design, and all that he finished of the Poem, in a subsequent section.

Verona,

Verona, Milan, Turin, and Lyons. From all which places he writ either to his Father or Mother with great punctuality : But merely to inform them of his health and safety ; about which (as might be expected) they were now very anxious, as he travelled with only a ' Laquais du Voyage.' These letters do not even mention that he went out of his way to make a second visit to the Grande Chartreuse,\* and there wrote in the Album of the Fathers the following Alcaic † Ode, with which I conclude this Section.

## O D E.

Oh Tu, severi Religio loci,  
 Quocunque gaudes nomine (non leve  
     Nativa nam certè fluenta  
     Numèn habet, veteresque sylvas ;  
 Præsentio rem & conspici mus Deum  
 Per invias rupes, fera per juga,  
     Clivosque præruptos, sonantes  
     Inter aquas, nemorumque noctem ;

\* He was at Turin the 15th of August, and began to cross the Alps the next day. On the 25th he reached Lyons ; therefore it must have been between these two dates that he made this visit.

† We saw in the 8th and 11th letters how much Mr. Gray was struck with the awful scenery which surrounds the Chartreuse, at a time his mind must have been in a far more tranquil state than when he wrote this excellent Ode. It is marked, I think, with all the finest touches of his melancholy Muse, and flows with such an originality of expression, that one can hardly lament he did not honour his own language by making it the vehicle of this noble imagery and pathetic sentiment.

Quàm



Quàm si repòstus sub trabe citreâ  
 Fulgeret auro, & Phidiacâ manu)  
 Salve vocanti ritè, fessò et  
 Da placidam juveni quietem.  
 Quod si invidendis sedibus, & frui  
 Fortuna sacrâ lege silentii  
 Vetat volentem, me resorbens  
 In medios violenta fluctus :  
 Saltem remoto des, Pater, angulo  
 Horas senectæ ducere liberas ;  
 Tutumque vulgari tumultu  
 Surripias, hominumque curis.

END OF THE SECOND SECTION.

S E C.

## SECTION THE THIRD.

**W**HEN Mr. Gray returned from abroad, he found his Father's constitution almost entirely worn out by the very severe attacks of the gout, to which he had been for many years subject ; and indeed the next return of that distemper was fatal to him. \* This happened about two months after his son reached London.

It has been before observed, that Mr. Philip Gray was of a reserved and indolent temper ; he was also morose, unsocial, and obstinate ; defects which, if not inherent in his disposition, might probably arise from his bodily complaints. His indolence had led him to neglect the business of † his profession ; his obstinacy to build a country-house at Wanstead, without acquainting either his wife or son with the design (to which he knew they would be very averse) till it was executed. This building which he undertook late in life, was attended with very considerable expence ; which might almost be called so much money thrown away : since, after his death, the

\* He came to town about the 1st of September, 1741. His Father died the 6th of November following, at the age of sixty-five.

† His business was that which at the time was called a Money-Scrivener ; and it may not be amiss to mention, for the singularity of the thing, that Milton's father was of the same profession : But he also had "Music in his soul," and was esteemed a considerable master in that science. Some of his compositions are extant in Old Wilby's Set of Airs, and in Ravenscroft's Psalms. The great Poet alludes finely both to the musical genius and the trade of his father in those beautiful hexameters, "Ad Patrem," which are inserted amongst his Latin Poems.

house was obliged to be sold for two thousand pounds less than its original cost. Mr. Gray, therefore, at this time found his patrimony so small, that it would by no means enable him to prosecute the study of the law, without his becoming burthensome to his Mother and Aunt. These two sisters had for many years carried on \* a trade separate from that of Mrs. Gray's husband ; by which, having acquired what would support them decently for the rest of their lives, they left off business soon after his death, and retired to Stoke, near Windsor, to the house of their other Sister, Mrs. Rogers, lately become the widow of a Gentleman of the Law of that name. Both of them wished Mr. Gray to follow the profession for which he had been originally intended, and would undoubtedly have contributed all in their power to enable him to do it with ease and conveniency. He on his part, though he had taken his resolution of declining it, was too delicate to hurt two persons for whom he had so tender an affection, by peremptorily declaring his real intentions ; and therefore changed, or pretended to change, the line of that study ; and, accordingly, the latter end of the subsequent year went to Cambridge to take his Bachelor's Degree in Civil Law.

But the narrowness of his circumstances was not the only thing that distressed him at this period. He had, as we have seen, lost the friendship of Mr. Walpole abroad. He had also lost much time in his travels ; a loss which application could not easily retrieve, when so severe and laborious a study as that of the Common Law was to be the object of

\* They kept a kind of India warehouse on Cornhill under the joint names of Gray and Antrobus.

it; and he well knew that, whatever improvement he might have made in this interval, either in taste or science, such improvement would stand him in little stead with regard to his present situation and exigencies. This was not all: His other friend, Mr. West, he found on his return, oppressed by sickness and a load of family misfortunes; which, were I fully acquainted with them, it would not be my inclination here to dwell upon. These the sympathizing heart of Mr. Gray made his own. He did all in his power (for he was now with him in London) to soothe the sorrows of his friend, and try to alleviate them by every office of the purest and most perfect affection: But his cares were vain. The distresses of Mr. West's mind had already too far affected a body, from the first weak and delicate. His health declined daily, and therefore he left town in March 1742, and, for the benefit of the air, went to David Mitchell's, Esq; at Popes, near Hatfield, Hertfordshire; at whose house he died the 1st of June following.

It is from this place, and from the former date, that this third series of letters commences.

## L E T T E R I.\*

Mr. WEST to Mr. GRAY.

**I** Write to make you write, for I have not much to tell you. I have recovered no spirits as yet; but, as I am not displeased with my company, I sit purring by the fire-side in my arm-chair with no

\* This letter is inserted as introductory only to the answer which follows.



small satisfaction. I read too sometimes, and have begun Tacitus, but have not yet read enough to judge of him ; only his Pannonian sedition in the first book of his annals, which is just as far as I have got, seemed to me a little tedious. I have no more to say, but to desire you will write letters of a handsome length, and always answer me within a reasonable space of time, which I leave to your discretion.  
*Popes, March 28, 1742.*

P. S. The new Dunciad ! qu'en pensez vous ?

## LETTER II.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WEST.

**I** Trust to the country, and that easy indolence you say you enjoy there, to restore you your health and spirits ; and doubt not but, when the sun grows warm enough to tempt you from your fire-side, you will (like all other things) be the better for his influence. He is my old friend, and an excellent nurse, I assure you. Had it not been for him, life had often been to me intolerable. Pray do not imagine that Tacitus, of all authors in the world, can be tedious. An annalist, you know, is by no means master of his subject ; and I think one may venture to say, that if these Pannonian affairs are tedious in his hands, in another's they would have been insupportable. However, fear not they will soon be over, and he will make ample amends. A man, who could join the *brilliant* of wit and concise sententiousness peculiar to that age, with the truth and gravity of better times, and the deep reflection

fection and good sense of the best moderns, cannot choose but have something to strike you. Yet what I admire in him above all this, is his detestation of tyranny, and the high spirit of liberty that every now and then breaks out, as it were, whether he would or no. I remember a sentence in his *Agricola* that (concise as it is) I always admired for saying much in a little compass. He speaks of Domitian, who upon seeing the last will of that General, where he had made him Coheir with his Wife and Daughter, “*Satis constabat latatum eum, velut honore, judicioque: tam cæca & corrupta mens assiduis adulationibus erat, ut nesciret a bono patre non scribi hæredem, nisi malum principem.*”

As to the *Dunciad* it is greatly admired: The Genii of Operas and Schools, with their attendants, the pleas of the Virtuoso's and Florists, and the yawn of Dulness in the end, are as fine as any thing he has written. The Metaphysicians' part is to me the worst; and here and there a few ill-expressed lines, and some hardly intelligible.

I take the liberty of sending you a long speech of Agrippina; much too long, but I could be glad you would retrench it. Acronia, you may remember, had been giving quiet counsels. I fancy, if it ever be finished, it will be in the nature of Nat. Lee's *Bedlam Tragedy*, which had twenty-five acts and some odd scenes.

The speech herewith sent to Mr. West was the concluding one of the first scene of a tragedy, which I believe was begun the preceding winter. The *Britannicus* of M. Racine, I know was one of Mr. Gray's most favourite plays; and the admirable manner in which I have heard him say that he saw it represented at Paris, seems to have led him to choose the death of Agrippina for this his first and

only effort in the drama. The execution of it also, as far as it goes, is so very much in Racine's taste, that I suspect if that great poet had been born an Englishman, he would have written precisely in the same style and manner. However, as there is at present in this nation a general prejudice against declamatory plays, I agree with a learned friend, who perused the manuscript, that this fragment will be little relished by the many; yet the admirable strokes of nature and character with which it abounds, and the majesty of its diction, prevent me from withholding from the few, who I expect will relish it, so great a curiosity (to call it nothing more) as part of a tragedy written by Mr. Gray. These persons well know, that till style and sentiment be a little more regarded, mere action and passion will never secure reputation to the Author, whatever they may do to the Actor. It is the business of the one "to strut and fret his hour upon the stage;" and if he frets and struts enough, he is sure to find his reward in the plaudit of an upper gallery; but the other ought to have some regard to the cooler judgment of the closet: For I will be bold to say, that if Shakespeare himself had not written a multitude of passages which please there as much as they do on the stage, his reputation would not stand so universally high as it does at present. Many of these passages, to the shame of our theatrical taste, are omitted constantly in the representation: But I say not this from conviction that the mode of writing, which Mr. Gray pursued, is the best for dramatic purposes. I think myself, what I have asserted elsewhere \*, that a medium between the

\* See Letters prefixt to *Elfrida*, particularly Letter II.

French and English taste would be preferable to either; and yet this medium, if hit with the greatest nicety, would fail of success on our theatre, and that for a very obvious reason. Actors (I speak of the whole body collectively) must all learn to speak as well as to act, in order to do justice to such a drama.

But let me hasten to give the reader what little insight I can into Mr. Gray's plan, as I find, and select it from two detached papers. The title and *Dramatis Personæ* are as follow:

## AGRIPPINA, a TRAGEDY.

### DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

- AGRIPPINA, the Empress Mother.  
 NERO, the Emperor.  
 POPPÆA, believed to be in love with OTHO.  
 OTHO, a young man of quality, in love with POPPÆA.  
 SENECA, the Emperor's Preceptor.  
 ANICETUS, Captain of the guards.  
 DEMETRIUS, the Cynic, friend to SENECA.  
 ACERONIA, Confidante to AGRIPPINA.

SCENE, the Emperor's villa at BAIA.

The argument drawn out by him, in these two papers, under the idea of a plot and under-plot, I shall here unite; as it will tend to show that the action itself was possess of sufficient unity.

The drama opens with the indignation of Agrippina, at receiving her son's orders from Anicetus to remove from Baia, and to have her guard taken from her. At this time Otho having conveyed Pop-



pæa from the house of her husband Rufus Crispinus, brings her to Baiæ, where he means to conceal her among the croud ; or, if his fraud is discovered, to have recourse to the Emperor's authority ; but, knowing the lawless temper of Nero, he determines not to have recourse to that expedient, but on the utmost necessity. In the mean time he commits her to the care of Anicetus, whom he takes to be his friend, and in whose age he thinks he may safely confide. Nero is not yet come to Baiæ ; but Seneca, whom he sends before him, informs Agrippina of the accusation concerning Rubellius Plancus, and desires her to clear herself, which she does briefly ; but demands to see her son, who, on his arrival, acquits her of all suspicion, and restores her to her honours. In the mean while Anicetus, to whose care Poppæa had been entrusted by Otho, contrives the following plot to ruin Agrippina : He betrays his trust to Otho, and brings Nero, as it were by chance, to the sight of the beautiful Poppæa ; the Emperor is immediately struck with her charms, and she, by a feigned resistance, increases his passion ; tho', in reality, she is from the first dazzled with the prospect of empire, and forgets Otho : She therefore joins with Anicetus in his design of ruining Agrippina, soon perceiving that it will be for her interest. Otho hearing that the Emperor had seen Poppæa, is much enraged ; but not knowing that this interview was obtained thro' the treachery of Anicetus, is readily persuaded by him to see Agrippina in secret, and acquaint her with his fears that her son Nero would marry Poppæa. Agrippina, to support her own power, and to wean the Emperor from the love of Poppæa, gives Otho encouragement, and promises to support him. Anicetus secretly introduces Nero to hear their discourse ; who  
resolves

resolves immediately on his mother's death, and, by Anicetus's means, to destroy her by drowning. A solemn feast, in honour of their reconciliation, is to be made; after which she being to go by sea to Bauli, the ship is so contrived as to sink or crush her; she escapes by accident and returns to Baiæ. In this interval, Otho has an interview with Poppæa; and being duped a second time by Anicetus and her, determines to fly with her into Greece, by means of a vessel which is to be furnished by Anicetus; but he, pretending to remove Poppæa on board in the night, conveys her to Nero's apartment: She there encourages and determines Nero to banish Otho, and finish the horrid deed he had attempted on his mother. Anicetus undertakes to execute her resolves; and, under pretence of a plot upon the Emperor's life, is sent with a guard to murder Agrippina, who is still at Baiæ in imminent fear, and irresolute how to conduct herself. The account of her death, and the Emperor's horror and fruitless remorse, finishes the drama.

I refer the reader to the 13th and fourteenth books of the annals for the facts on which this story is founded: By turning to that author, he will easily see how far the poet thought it necessary to deviate from the truth of history. I shall only further observe, that as such a fable could not possibly admit of any good character, it is terror only and not pity that could be excited by this tragedy, had it been compleated. Yet it was surely capable of exciting this passion in a supreme degree; if, what the critics tell us be true, that crimes, which illustrious persons commit, affect us from the very circumstance of their rank, because we unite with that our fears for the public weal.

## ACT I. SCENE I.

AGRIPPINA, ACERONIA.

AGRIPPINA.

**T**IS well, begone ! your errand is perform'd :  
*[Speaks as to Anicetus entering.]*  
 The message needs no comment. Tell your master,  
 His mother shall obey him. Say you saw her  
 Yielding due reverence to his high command :  
 Alone, unguarded, and without a Liſtor,  
 As fits the daughter of Germanicus.  
 Say, ſhe retired to Antium ; there to tend  
 Her houſhold cares, a woman's beſt employment.  
 What if you add, how ſhe turn'd pale and trembled ;  
 You think, you ſpied a tear ſtand in her eye,  
 And would have drop'd, but that her pride reſtrain'd it ?  
 (Go ! you can paint it well) 'twill profit you,  
 And pleaſe the ſtripling. Yet 'twould daſh his joy  
 To hear the ſpirit of Britannicus  
 Yet walks on earth ; at leaſt there are who know  
 Without a ſpell to raiſe and bid it fire  
 A thouſand haughty hearts, unus'd to ſhake  
 When a boy frowns, nor to be lur'd with ſmiles  
 To taſte of hollow kindneſs, or partake  
 His hoſpitable board : They are aware  
 Of th' unpledg'd bowl, they love not Aconite.

ACERONIA.

He's gone ; and much I hope theſe walls alone,  
 And the mute air are privy to your paſſion.  
 Forgive your ſervant's fears, who ſees the danger  
 Which fierce reſentment cannot fail to raiſe  
 In haughty youth, and irritated power.

AGRIP-

## A G R I P P I N A.

And dost thou talk to me, to me, of danger,  
 Of haughty youth, and irritated power,  
 To her that gave it being, her that arm'd  
 This painted Jove, and taught his novice hand  
 To aim the forked bolt ; while he stood trembling  
 Scar'd at the sound, and dazzled with its brightness ?

'Tis like, thou hast forgot, when yet a stranger  
 To adoration, to the grateful steam  
 Of flattery's incense, and obsequious vows  
 From voluntary realms, a puny boy,  
 Deck'd with no other lustre, than the blood  
 Of Agrippina's race, he liv'd unknown  
 To fame, or fortune ; haply eyed at distance  
 Some edileship, ambitious of the power  
 To judge of weights, and measures ; scarcely dar'd  
 On expectation's strongest wing to soar  
 High as the consulate, that empty shade  
 Of long-forgotten liberty : When I  
 Oped his young eye to bear the blaze of greatness ;  
 Shew'd him, where empire tower'd, and bade him  
 strike

The noble quarry. Gods ! then was the time  
 To shrink from danger ; fear might then have worn  
 The mask of prudence : but a heart like mine,  
 A heart that glows with the pure Julian fire,  
 If bright Ambition from her craggy seat  
 Display the radiant prize, will mount undaunted,  
 Gain the rough heights, and grasp the dangerous  
 honour.

## A C E R O N I A.

Thro' various life I have pursued your steps,  
 Have seen your soul, and wonder'd at its daring :  
 Hence rise my fears. Nor am I yet to learn  
 How vast the debt of gratitude, which Nero



To such a mother owes ; the world, you gave him,  
Suffices not to pay the obligation.

I well remember too (for I was present)  
When in a secret and dead hour of night,  
Due sacrifice perform'd with barb'rous rites  
Of mutter'd charms, and solemn invocation,  
You bade the Magi call the dreadful powers,  
That read futurity, to know the fate  
Impending o'er your son : Their answer was,  
If the son reign, the mother perishes.  
Perish (you cry'd) the mother ! reign the son !  
He reigns, the rest is heav'n's ; who oft has bade,  
Ev'n when its will seem'd wrote in lines of blood,  
Th' unthought event disclose a whiter meaning.  
Think too how oft in weak and sickly minds  
The sweets of kindness lavishly indulg'd  
Rankle to gall ; and benefits too great  
To be repaid, sit heavy on the soul,  
As unrequited wrongs. The willing homage  
Of prostrate Rome, the senate's joint applause,  
The riches of the earth, the train of pleasures,  
That wait on youth, and arbitrary sway ;  
These were your gift, and with them you bestow'd  
The very power he has to be ungrateful.

AGRIPPINA.

Thus ever grave, and undisturb'd reflection  
Pours its cool dictates in the madding ear  
Of rage, and thinks to quench the fire it feels not.  
Say'st thou I must be cautious, must be silent,  
And tremble at the phantom I have rais'd ?  
Carry to him thy timid counsels. He  
Perchance may heed 'em : Tell him too, that one,  
Who had such liberal power to give, may still  
With equal power resume that gift, and raise  
A tempest, that shall shake her own creation  
To its original atoms—tell me ! say

This

This mighty Emperor, this dreadful Hero,  
 Has he beheld the glittering front of war ?  
 Knows his soft ear the Trumpet's thrilling voice,  
 And outcry of the battle ? Have his limbs  
 Sweat under iron harness ? Is he not  
 The silken son of dalliance, nurs'd in Ease  
 And Pleasure's flowery lap ?—Rubellius lives,  
 And Sylla has his friends, tho' school'd by fear  
 To bow the supple knee, and court the times  
 With shows of fair obeisance ; and a call,  
 Like mine, might serve belike to wake pretensions  
 Drowfier than theirs, who boast the genuine blood  
 Of our imperial house.

## ACERONIA.

Did I not wish to check this dangerous passion,  
 I might remind my mistress that her nod  
 Can rouse eight hardy legions, wont to stem  
 With stubborn nerves the tide, and face the rigour  
 Of bleak Germania's snows. Four, not less brave,  
 That in Armenia quell the Parthian force  
 Under the warlike Corbulo, by you  
 Mark'd for their leader : These, by ties confirm'd,  
 Of old respect and gratitude, are yours.  
 Surely the Massians too, and those of Egypt,  
 Have not forgot your sire : The eye of Rome  
 And the Prætorian camp have long rever'd,  
 With custom'd awe, the daughter, sister, wife,  
 And mother of their Cæsars.

## AGRIPPINA.

Ha ! by Juno,  
 It bears a noble semblance. On this base  
 My great revenge shall rise ; or say we found  
 The trump of liberty ; there will not want,  
 Even in the servile senate, ears to own  
 Her spirit-stirring voice ; Soranus there,  
 And Cassius ; Vetus too, and Thrasea,

Minds of the antique cast, rough, stubborn souls,  
 That struggle with the yoke. How shall the spark  
 Unquenchable, that glows within their breasts,  
 Blaze into freedom, when the idle herd  
 (Slaves from the womb, created but to stare,  
 And bellow in the Circus) yet will start,  
 And shake 'em at the name of liberty,  
 Stung by a senseless word, a vain tradition,  
 As there were magic in it? wrinkled beldams  
 Teach it their grand children, as somewhat rare  
 That anciently appear'd, but when, extends  
 Beyond their chronicle—oh! 'tis a cause  
 To arm the hand of childhood, and rebrace  
 The slacken'd sinews of time-wearied age.

Yes, we may meet, ingrateful boy, we may!  
 Again the buried genius of old Rome  
 Shall from the dust uprear his reverend head,  
 Rous'd by the shout of millions: There before  
 His high tribunal thou and I appear.  
 Let majesty sit on thy awful brow,  
 And lighten from thy eye: Around thee call  
 The gilded swarm that wantons in the sunshine  
 Of thy full favour; Seneca be there  
 In gorgeous phrase of labour'd eloquence  
 To dress thy plea, and Burrhus strengthen it  
 With his plain soldier's oath, and honest seeming.  
 Against thee liberty and Agrippina:  
 The world, the prize; and fair befall the victors.

But soft! why do I waste the fruitless hours  
 In threats unexecuted? Haste thee, fly  
 These hated walls, that seem to mock my shame,  
 And cast me forth in duty to their lord.

ACERONIA.

'Tis time we go, the sun is high advanc'd,  
 And, ere mid-day, Nero will come to Baia.

AGRIFF-

## A G R I P P I N A.

My thought aches at him ; not the basilisk  
 More deadly to the fight, than is to me  
 The cool injurious eye of frozen kindness.  
 I will not meet its poison. Let him feel  
 Before he sees me.

## A C E R O N I A.

Why then stays my sovereign,  
 Where he so soon may——

## A G R I P P I N A.

Yes, I will be gone,  
 But not to Antium—all shall be confess'd,  
 Whate'er the frivolous tongue of giddy fame  
 Has spread among the crowd ; things, that but  
 whisper'd

Have arch'd the hearer's brow, and rivetted  
 His eyes in fearful extasy : No matter  
 What ; so't be strange, and dreadful.—Sorceries,  
 Assassinations, poisonings—the deeper  
 My guilt, the blacker his ingratitude.

And you, ye manes of ambition's victims,  
 Enshrined Claudius, with the pitied ghosts  
 Of the Syllani, doom'd to early death,  
 (Ye unavailing horrors, fruitless crimes !)  
 If from the realms of night my voice ye hear,  
 In lieu of penitence, and vain remorse,  
 Accept my vengeance. Tho' by me ye bled,  
 He was the cause. My love, my fears for him,  
 Dried the soft springs of pity in my heart,  
 And froze them up with deadly cruelty.  
 Yet if your injur'd shades demand my fate,  
 If murder cries for murder, blood for blood,  
 Let me not fall alone ; but crush his pride,  
 And sink the traitor in his mother's ruin. [Exeunt.]

S C E N E



## S C E N E II.

O T H O, P O P P Æ A.

O T H O.

Thus far we're safe. Thanks to the rosy queen  
 Of amorous thefts : And had her wanton son  
 Lent us his wings, we could not have beguil'd  
 With more elusive speed the dazzled fight  
 Of wakeful jealousy. Be gay securely ;  
 Dispel, my fair, with smiles, the tim'rous cloud  
 That hangs on thy clear brow. So Helen look'd,  
 So her white neck reclin'd, so was she borne  
 By the young Trojan to his gilded bark  
 With fond reluctance, yielding modesty,  
 And oft reverted eye, as if she knew not  
 Whether she fear'd, or with'd to be pursued.

\* \* \* \* \*

## L E T T E R III.

Mr. WEST to Mr. GRAY.

*Popes, April 4, 1742.*

**I** Own in general I think Agrippina's speech too long:  
 \* but how to retrench it, I know not : But I have  
 something else to say, and that is in relation to the

\* The Editor has obviated this objection, not by retrenching, but by putting part of it into the mouth of Aceronia, and by breaking it in a few other places. Originally it was one continued speech from the line " Thus ever grave and undisturb'd Reflection" to the end of the scene; which was undoubtedly too long for the lungs of any Actress.

style,

style, which appears to me too antiquated. Racine was of another opinion ; he no where gives you the phrases of Ronfard : His language is the language of the times, and that of the purest sort ; so that his French is reckoned a standard. I will not decide what style is fit for our English stage ; but I should rather choose one that bordered upon Cato, than upon Shakespeare. One may imitate (if one can) Shakespeare's manner, his surprizing strokes of true nature, his expressive force in painting characters, and all his other beauties ; preserving at the same time our own language. Were Shakespeare alive now, he would write a different style from what he did. These are my sentiments upon these matters : Perhaps I am wrong, for I am neither a Tarpa, nor am I quite an Aristarchus. You see I write freely both of you and Shakespeare ; but it is as good as writing not freely, where you know it is acceptable.

I have been tormented within this week with a most violent cough ; for when once it sets up its note, it will go on, cough after cough, shaking and tearing me for half an hour together ; and then it leaves me in a great sweat, as much fatigued as if I had been labouring at the plough. All this description of my cough in prose, is only to introduce another description of it in verse, perhaps not worth your perusal : but it is very short, and besides has this remarkable in it, that it was the production of four o'clock in the morning, while I lay in my bed tossing and coughing, and all unable to sleep.—

Ante omnes morbos importunissima tussis,  
 Quâ durare datur, traxitque sub ilia vires.  
 Dura etenim versans imo sub pectore regna,  
 Perpetuo exercet teneras luctamine costas,

Oraque

Oraque distorquet, vocemque immutat anhelam :  
 Nec cessare locus : sed sævo concita motu  
 Molle domat latus, & corpus labor omne fatigat :  
 Unde molesta dies, noctemque insomnia turbant.  
 Nec Tua, si mecum Comes hic jucundus adestes,  
 Verba juvare queant, aut hunc lenire dolorem  
 Sufficiant tua vox dulcis, nec vultus amatus.

Do not mistake me, I do not condemn Tacitus : I was then inclined to find him tedious : The German sedition sufficiently made up for it ; and the speech of Germanicus, by which he reclaims his soldiers, is quite masterly. Your New Dunciad I have no conception of. I shall be too late for our dinner if I write any more.

Yours.

## LETTER VI.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WEST.

*London, April, Thursday.*

**Y**OU are the first who ever made a Muse of a Cough ; to me it seems a much more easy task to versify in one's sleep, (that indeed you were of old famous for \*) than for want of it. Not the wakeful nightingale (when she had a cough) ever sung so sweetly. I give you thanks for your warble, and wish you could sing yourself to rest. These wicked remains of your illness will sure give way to warm weather and gentle exercise ; which I hope you will not omit as the season advances. Whatever low spirits and indolence, the effect of them, may advise to the contrary, I pray you add five steps to

\* I suppose at Eton School.

your walk daily for my sake ; by the help of which in a month's time, I propose to set you on horseback.

I talked of the *Dunciad* as concluding you had seen it ; if you have not, do you choose I should get and send it to you ? I have myself, upon your recommendation, been reading Joseph Andrews. The incidents are ill laid and without invention ; but the characters have a great deal of nature, which always pleases even in her lowest shapes. Parson Adams is perfectly well ; so is Mrs. Slipslop, and the story of Wilson ; and throughout he shews himself well read in Stage-Coaches, Country Squires, Inns, and Inns of Court. His reflections upon high people and low people, and misses and masters, are very good. However the exaltedness of some minds (or rather as I shrewdly suspect their insipidity and want of feeling or observation) may make them insensible to these light things, (I mean such as characterize and paint nature) yet surely they are as weighty and much more useful than your grave discourses upon the mind \*, the passions, and what not. Now as the paradisaical pleasures † of the Mahometans consist in playing upon the flute and lying with Houris, be mine to read eternal new romances of Marivaux and Crebillon.

\* He seems here to glance at Hutchinson, the disciple of Shaftesbury : Of whom he had little better opinion, than of his master.

† Whimsically put.—But what shall we say of the present taste of the French, when a writer whom Mr. Gray so justly esteemed as M. Marivaux, is now held in such contempt, that *Marivauder* is a fashionable phrase amongst them, and signifies neither more nor less, than our fashionable phrase of *praising* ? As to Crebillon, 'twas his "*Egaremens du Cœur & d'Esprit*" that our author chiefly esteemed ; he had not, I believe, at this time published his more licentious pieces.

You



You are very good in giving yourself the trouble to read and find fault with my long harangues. Your freedom (as you call it) has so little need of apologies, that I should scarce excuse your treating me any otherwise ; which, whatever compliment it might be to my vanity, would be making a very ill one to my understanding. As to matter of style, I have this to say : The language of the age † is never the language of poetry ; except among the French, whose verse, where the thought or image does not support it, differs in nothing from prose. Our poetry, on the contrary, has a language peculiar to itself ; to which almost every one, that has written, has added something by enriching it with foreign idioms and derivatives : Nay sometimes words of their own composition or invention. Shakespeare and Milton have been great creators this way ; and no one more licentious than Pope or Dryden, who perpetually borrow expressions from the former. Let me give you some instances from Dryden, whom every body reckons a great master of our poetical tongue.—Full of *useful mopeings*—unlike the *trim* of love—a pleasant *beverage*—a *roundelay* of love—stood silent in his *mood*—with knots and *knarres* deformed—his *ireful mood*—in proud *array*—his *boon* was granted—and *disarray* and shameful rout—*wayward* but wise—*furbiſhed* for the field—the *foiled dodderd* oaks—*diſperited*—*ſmouldring* flames—*retchleſs* of laws—*crones* old and ugly—the *beldam* at his ſide—the *grandam-bag*—*villanize* his father's fame.—But they are infinite : And our language

† Nothing can be more juſt than this obſervation ; and nothing more likely to preſerve our poetry from falling into infipidity, than purſuing the rules here laid down for ſupporting the diſtion of it : Particularly with reſpect to the Drama.

not

not being a settled thing (like the French) has an undoubted right to words of an hundred years old, provided antiquity have not rendered them unintelligible. In truth, Shakespeare's language is one of his principal beauties; and he has no less advantage over your Addisons and Rowes in this, than in those other great excellencies you mention. Every word in him is a picture. Pray put me the following lines into the tongue of our modern Dramatics:

But I, that am not shaped for sportive tricks,  
Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass:  
I, that am rudely stamp'd, and want love's majesty  
To strut before a wanton ambling nymph:  
I, that am curtail'd of this fair proportion,  
Cheated of feature by dissembling nature,  
Deform'd, unfinish'd, sent before my time  
Into this breathing world, scarce half made up—  
And what follows. To me they appear untranslatable; and if this be the case, our language is greatly degenerated. However, the affectation of imitating Shakespeare may doubtless be carried too far; and is no sort of excuse for sentiments ill-suited, or speeches ill-timed, which I believe is a little the case with me. I guess the most faulty expressions may be these—*filken* son of dalliance—*drowsier* pretensions—wrinkled *beldams*—*arched* the hearer's brow and *riveted* his eyes in *fearful extasie*. These are easily altered or omitted; and indeed if the thoughts be wrong or superfluous, there is nothing easier than to leave out the whole. The first ten or twelve lines are, I believe, the best †; and as for the rest, I was betrayed into a good deal of it by Tacitus; only

† The lines which he means here are from—*thus ever grove and undisturb'd reflection—to Rubellius lives*. For the part of the scene, which he sent in his former letter, began there.

what he has said in five words, I imagine I have said in fifty lines : Such is the misfortune of imitating the inimitable. Now, if you are of my opinion, una litura may do the business, better than a dozen ; you need not fear unravelling my web. I am a sort of spider ; and have little else to do but spin it over again, or creep to some other place and spin there. Alas ! for one who has nothing to do but amuse himself, I believe my amusements are as little amusing as most folks. But no matter ; it makes the hours pass, and is better than *ἐν ἀμαδίᾳ καὶ ἀμυσίᾳ καταβιῶναι*.

Adieu.

## L E T T E R V.

Mr. WEST to Mr. GRAY.

**T**O begin with the conclusion of your letter, which is Greek, I desire that you will quarrel no more with your manner of passing your time. In my opinion it is irreproachable, especially as it produces such excellent fruit ; and if I, like a saucy bird, must be pecking at it, you ought to consider that it is because I like it. No una litura I beg you, no unravelling of your web, dear Sir ! only pursue it a little further, and then one shall be able to judge of it a little better. You know the crisis of a play is in the first act ; its damnation or salvation wholly rests there. But till that first act is over, every body suspends his vote ; so how do you think I can form, as yet, any just idea of the speeches in regard to their length or shortness. The connection and symmetry of such little parts with one another must naturally escape me, as not having the plan of the

the whole in my head ; neither can I decide about the thoughts whether they are wrong or superfluous ; they may have some future tendency which I perceive not. The style only was free to me, and there I find we are pretty much of the same sentiment : For you say the affectation of imitating Shakespeare may doubtless be carried too far ; I say as much and no more. For old words we know are old gold, provided they are well chosen. Whatever Ennius was, I do not consider Shakespeare as a dunghill in the least : On the contrary, he is a mine of antient ore, where all our great modern poets have found their advantage. I do not know how it is : but his old expressions\* have more energy in them than ours, and are even more adapted to poetry ; certainly, where they are judiciously and sparingly inserted, they add a certain grace to the composition ; in the same manner as Poussin gave a beauty to his picture by his knowledge in the ancient proportions : But should he, or any other painter, carry the imitation too far, and neglect that best of models Nature, I am afraid it would prove a very flat performance. To finish this long criticism : I have this further notion about old words revived, (is not this a pretty way of finishing ?) I think them of excellent use in tales ; they add a certain drollery to the comic, and a romantic gravity to the seri-

\* Shakespeare's energy does not arise so much from these old expressions, (most of which were not old in his time) but from his artificial management of them. This artifice in the great Poet is developed with much exactness by Dr. Hurd in his excellent note on this passage in Horace's Ep. ad Pisones.

Dixeris egregiè, notum si callida verbum  
Reddiderit junctura novum.

See Hurd's *Horace*, vol. 1st, Ed. 4th, p. 49.

ous,



ous, which are both charming in their kind ; and this way of charming Dryden understood very well. One need only read Milton to acknowledge the dignity they give the Epic. But now comes my opinion that they ought to be used in Tragedy more sparingly, than in most kinds of poetry. Tragedy is designed for public representation, and what is designed for that should be certainly most intelligible. I believe half the audience that come to Shakespeare's plays do not understand the half of what they hear.—But finissons enfin.—Yet one word more.—You think the ten or twelve first lines the best, now I am for the fourteen last\* ; add, that they contain not one word of antientry.

I rejoice you found amusement in Joseph Andrews. But then I think your conceptions of Paradise a little upon the Bergerac. *Les Lettres du Seraphim R. à Madame la Cherubinesse de Q.* What a piece of extravagance would there be !

And now you must know that my body continues weak and enervate. And for my animal spirits, they are in perpetual fluctuation : some whole days I have no relish, no attention for any thing ; at other times I revive, and am capable of writing a long letter, as you see ; and though I do not write speeches, yet I translate them. When you understand what speech, you will own that it is a bold and perhaps a dull attempt. In three words, it is prose,

\* He means the conclusion of the first scene.—But here and throughout his criticism on old words, he is not so consistent as his correspondent ; for he here insists that *all* antientry should be struck out, and in a former passage he admits it may be used sparingly.

it is from Tacitus, it is of Germanicus. Peruse,  
perpend, pronounce \*.

## LETTER VI.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WEST.

*London, April, 1742.*

I Should not have failed to answer your Letter immediately, but I went out of the town for a little while, which hindered me. Its length (besides the pleasure naturally accompanying a long letter from you) affords me a new one, when I think it is a symptom of the recovery of your health, and flatter myself that your bodily strength returns in proportion. Pray do not forget to mention the progress you make continually. As to Agrippina, I begin to be of your opinion; and find myself (as women are of their children) less enamoured of my productions the older they grow. † She is laid up to sleep till next summer; so bid her good night. I think you have

\* This speech I omit to print, as I have generally avoided to publish mere translations either of Mr. Gray or his friend.

† He never after awakened her; and I believe this was occasioned by the strictures which his friend had made on his dramatic style; which (though he did not think them well founded, as they certainly were not) had an effect which Mr. West, we may believe, did not intend them to have. I remember some years after I was the innocent cause of his delaying to finish his fine ode on the progress of Poetry. I told him, on reading the part he showed me, that "though I  
" admired it greatly, and thought that it breathed the very  
" spirit of the Pindar, yet I suspected it would by no means hit  
" the public taste." Finding afterwards that he did not proceed in finishing it, I often expostulated with him on the subject;  
but

have translated Tacitus very justly, that is, freely; and accommodated his thoughts to the turn and genius of our language; which, though I commend your judgement, is no commendation of the English tongue, which is too diffuse, and daily grows more and more enervate. One shall never be more sensible of this, than in turning an Author like Tacitus. I have been trying it in some parts of Thucydides, (who has a little resemblance of him in his conciseness) and endeavoured to do it closely, but found it produced mere nonsense. If you have any inclination to see what figure Tacitus makes in Italian, I have a Tuscan translation of Davanzati, much esteemed in Italy; and will send you the same speech you sent me; that is, if you care for it. In the mean time accept of Propertius. \* \* \*

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LETTER VII.

Mr. WEST to Mr. GRAY.

*Popes, May 5, 1742.*

**W**ITHOUT any preface I come to your verses, which I read over and over with excessive pleasure, and which are at least as good as Propertius. I am only sorry you follow the blunders of Broukhufius, all whose insertions are nonsense. I have some objections to your antiquated

but he always replied "No, you have thrown cold water upon it." I mention this little anecdote, to shew how much the opinion of a friend, even when it did not convince his judgment, affected his inclination.

† A Translation of the 1st elegy of the 2d book in English rhyme; omitted for the reason given in the last note but one.

words,

words, and am also an enemy to Alexandrines ; at least I do not like them in Elegy. But, after all, I admire your translation so extremely, that I cannot help repeating I long to show you some little errors you are fallen into by following Broukhufius†. \* \* \* Were I with you now, and Propertius with your verses lay upon the table between us, I could discuss this point in a moment ; but there is nothing so tiresome as spinning out a criticism in a letter ; doubts arise, and explanation follow, till there swells out at least a volume of undigested observations : and all because you are not with him whom you want to convince. Read only the Letters between Pope and Cromwell in proof of this ; they dispute without end. Are you aware now that I have an interest all this while in banishing Criticism from our correspondence ? Indeed I have ; for I am going to write down a little Ode (if it deserves the name) for your perusal, which I am afraid will hardly stand that test. Nevertheless I leave you at your full liberty ; so here it follows.

## O D E.

Dear Gray, that always in my heart  
 Possessest far the better part,  
 What mean these sudden blasts that rise  
 And drive the Zephyrs from the skies ?  
 O join with mine thy tuneful lay,  
 And invoke the tardy May.

Come, fairest Nymph, resume thy reign !  
 Bring all the Graces in thy train !

† I have omitted here a paragraph or two, in which different lines of the elegy were quoted, because I had previously omitted the translation of it.

With



With balmy breath, and flowery tread,  
 Rise from thy soft ambrosial bed ;  
 Where, in Elysian slumber bound,  
 Embow'ring myrtles veil thee round.

Awake, in all thy glories drest,  
 Recall the Zephyrs from the west ;  
 Restore the sun, revive the skies,  
 At mine, and Nature's call, arise !  
 Great Nature's self upbraids thy stay,  
 And misses her accustom'd May.

See ! all her works demand thy aid ;  
 The labours of Pomona fade :  
 A plaint is heard from ev'ry tree ;  
 Each budding flow'ret calls for thee ;  
 The Birds forget to love and sing ;  
 With storms alone the forests ring.

Come then, with Pleasure at thy side,  
 Diffuse thy vernal spirit wide ;  
 Create, where'er thou turn'st thy eye,  
 Peace, Plenty, Love, and Harmony ;  
 Till ev'ry being share its part,  
 And Heav'n and Earth be glad at heart.

# L E T T E R VIII.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WEST.

*London, May 8, 1742.*

**I** Rejoice to see you putting up your prayers to the  
 May : She cannot choose but come at such a  
 call. It is as light and genteel as herself. You bid  
 me find fault ; I am afraid I cannot ; however I will  
 try.

try. The first stanza (if what you say to me in it did not make me think it the best) I should call the worst of the five (except the fourth line). The two next are very picturesque, Miltonic and musical; her bed is so soft and so snug that I long to lie with her. But those two lines, "Great Nature" are my favourites. The exclamation of the flowers is a little step too far. The last stanza is full as good as the second and third; the last line bold, but I think not too bold. Now, as to myself and my translation pray do not call names. I never saw Broukhufius in my life. It is Scaliger who attempted to range Propertius in order; who was, and still is, in sad condition || \* \* \*. You see, by what I sent you, that I converse, as usual, with none but the dead: They are my old friends, and almost make me long to be with them. You will not wonder therefore that I, who live only in times past, am able to tell you no news of the present. I have finished the Peloponnesian war much to my honour, and a tight conflict it was, I promise you. I have drank and sung with Anacreon for the last fortnight, and am now feeding sheep with Theocritus. Besides, to quit my figure, (because it is foolish) I have run over Pliny's Epistles and Martial *ἐκ παρέργου*; not to mention Petrarch, who, by the way, is sometimes very tender and natural. I must needs tell you three lines in Anacreon, where the expression seems to me inimitable. He is describing hair as he would have it painted.

Ἐλίκας δ' ἑλευθέρας μοι

Πλοκάμων ἄτακτα συνθεῖς

Ἄφες ὥς θέλῃσι κεῖσθαι.

|| Here some criticism on the Elegy is omitted for a former reason.

VOL. I.

G

Guest,

42.  
to the  
ch a  
bid  
will  
try.

Guess, too, where this is about a dimple.

Sigilla in mento impressa Amoris digitulo  
Vestigio demonstrant molliitudinem.

L E T T E R IX.

Mr. WEST to Mr. GRAY.

*Popes, May 11, 1742.*

**Y**OUR fragment is in Aulus Gellius ; and both it and your Greek delicious. But why are you thus melancholy ? I am so sorry for it, that you see I cannot forbear writing again the very first opportunity ; though I have little to say, except to expostulate with you about it. I find you converse much with the dead, and I do not blame you for that ; I converse with them too, though not indeed with the Greek. But I must condemn you for your longing to be with them. What, are there no joys among the living ? I could almost cry out with Catullus, “ Alphe ne immemor, atque unanimis false sodalibus !” But to turn an accusation thus upon another, is ungenerous ; so I will take my leave of you for the present with a “ Vale et vive paulisper cum “ vivis.”

L E T T E R X.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WEST.

*London, May 27, 1742.*

**M**INE, you are to know, is a white Melancholy, or rather Leucocholy for the most part ; which

which though it seldom laughs or dances, nor ever amounts to what one calls Joy or Pleasure, yet is a good easy sort of a state, and ça ne laisse que de s'amuser. The only fault of it is insipidity ; which is apt now and then to give a sort of Ennui, which makes one form certain little wishes that signify nothing. But there is another sort, black indeed, which I have now and then felt, that has somewhat in it like Tertullian's rule of faith, Credo quia impossibile est ; for it believes, nay, is sure of every thing that is unlikely, so it be but frightful ; and, on the other hand, excludes and shuts its eyes to the most possible hopes, and every thing that is pleasurable ; from this the Lord deliver us ! for none but he and sunshiny weather can do it. In hopes of enjoying this kind of weather, I am going into the country for a few weeks, but shall be never the nearer any society ; so, if you have any charity, you will continue to write. My life is like Harry the fourth's supper of Hens. " Pou-  
 " lets a la broche, Poulets en Ragout, Poulets en  
 " Hâchis, Poulets en Fricasées." Reading here, Reading there ; nothing but books with different sauces. Do not let me lose my dessert then ; for though that be Reading too, yet it has a very different flavour. The May seems to be come since your invitation ; and I propose to bask in her beams and dress me in her roses.

Et Caput in vernâ semper habere rosâ.

I shall see Mr. \* \* and his Wife, nay, and his child too, for he has got a boy. Is it not odd to consider one's cotemporaries in the grave light of Husband and Father ? There are my Lords \* \* and \* \* \*, they are Statesmen : Do not you remember them dirty boys playing at cricket ? As for me, I am never a bit the older, nor the bigger, nor the wiser than I was  
 G 2 then ;



then ; No, not for having been beyond sea. Pray how are you ?

I send you an inscription for a wood joining to a park of mine ; (it is on the confines of Mount Cithæron, on the left hand as you go to Thebes) you know I am no friend to hunters, and disturbed by their noise.

Ἀζόμενος πολύθηρον ἐκηβόλῃ ἄλσος ἀνάσσας  
τᾷς δεινᾷς τεμένει λειπε, κυναγέ, θεᾷς  
Μῆνοι ἄρ' ἐνθα κύνων ζαδείων κλαγγεῦσιν ὕλαγμοι  
ανταχεῖς Νυμφᾶν ἀγροτερᾶν κελάδῳ. \*

Here follows also the beginning of an Heroic Epistle ; but you must give me leave to tell my own story first, because Historians differ. Massinissa was the son of Gala King of the Massyli ; and, when very young at the head of his father's army, gave a most signal overthrow to Syphax, King of the Massylians, then an ally of the Romans. Soon after Asdrubal, son of Gisgo the Carthaginian General, gave the beautiful Sophonisba, his daughter, in marriage to the young prince. But this marriage was not consummated on account of Massinissa's being obliged to hasten into Spain, there to command his father's troops, who were auxiliaries of the Carthaginians. Their affairs at this time began to be in a bad condition ; and they thought it might be greatly for their interest, if they could bring over Syphax to themselves. This in time they actually effected ; and to strengthen their new alliance, com-

\* In the 12th Letter of the first Section, Mr. Gray says of his friend's translation of an Epigram of Posidippus, " Græcam illam ἀφελείαν mirificè sapit." The learned reader, I imagine, will readily give this tetrastich the same character.

manded Asdrubal to give his daughter to Syphax. (It is probable their ingratitude to Massinissa arose from the great change of affairs, which had happened among the Massylians during his absence; for his father and uncle were dead, and a distant relation of the royal family had usurped the throne.) Sophonisba was accordingly married to Syphax; and Massinissa, enraged at the affront, became a friend to the Romans. They drove the Carthaginians before them out of Spain, and carried the war into Africa, defeated Syphax, and took him prisoner; upon which Cirtha (his capital) opened her gates to Lælius and Massinissa. The rest of the affair, the marriage, and the sending of poison, every body knows. This is partly taken from Livy, and partly from Appian.

# SOPHONISBA MASSINISSÆ.

## EPISTOLA.

Egregium accipio promissi Munus amoris;  
 Inque manu mortem jam fruitura fero:  
 Atque utinam citius mandasses, luce velunâ;  
 Transieram Strygios non inhonesta lacus.  
 Victoris nec passa toros, nova nupta, mariti,  
 Nec fueram fastus, Roma superba, tuos.  
 Scilicet hæc partem tibi, Massinissa, triumphi  
 Detractam, hæc pompæ jura minora suæ  
 Imputat, atque uxor quod non tua pressa catenis,  
 Objecta & sævæ plausibus urbis eo:  
 Quin tu pro tantis cepisti præmia factis,  
 Magnum Romanæ pignus amicitiae!  
 Scipiadae excuses, oro, si tardius utar  
 Munere. Non nimium vivere, crede, velim.  
 Parva mora est, breve sed tempus mea fama requirit:

Detinet hæc animam cura suprema meam.  
 Quæ patriæ prodesse meæ Regina ferebar,  
 Inter Elisæas gloria prima nurus,  
 Ne videar flammæ nimis indulgisse secundæ,  
 Vel nimis hostiles extimuisse manus.  
 Fortunam atque annos liceat revocare priores,  
 Gaudiaque heu ! quantis nostra repensâ malis.  
 Primitiasne tuas meministi atque arma Syphacis  
 Fusa, & per Tyrias ducta trophæa vias ?  
 (Laudis at antiquæ forsan meminisse pigebit,  
 Quodque decus quondam causa ruboris erit.)  
 Tempus ego certe memini, felicia Pœnis .  
 Quo te non puduit solvere vota deis ;  
 Mæniæque intrantem vidi : longo agmine duxit  
 Turba salutantum, purpureique patres.  
 Fœminea ante omnes longe admiratur euntem  
 Hæret & aspectu tota caterva tuo.  
 Jam flexi, regale decus, per colla capilli,  
 Jam decet ardenti fuscus in ore color !  
 Commendat frontis generosa modestia formam,  
 Seque cupit laudi surripuisse suæ.  
 Prima genas tenui signat vix flore juvenas,  
 Et dextræ soli credimus esse virum.  
 Dum faciles gradiens oculos per singula jactas,  
 (Seu rexit casus lumina, sive Venus)  
 In me (vel certè visum est) conversa morari  
 Sensi ; virgineus perculit ora pudor.  
 Nescio quid vultum molle spirare tuendo  
 Credideramque tuos lentius ire pedes.  
 Quærebam, juxta æqualis si dignior esset,  
 Quæ poterat visus detinuisse tuos :  
 Nulla fuit circum æqualis quæ dignior esset,  
 Afferuitque decus conscia forma suum.

Pompæ finis erat \*. Totâ vix nocte quievi :  
 Sin premat invitæ lumina victa sopor,  
 Somnus habet pompas, eademque recurſat imago ;  
 Atque iterum heſterno munere victor ades.

\* \* \* \* \*

Immediately after writing the preceding Letter, Mr. Gray went upon a viſit to his relations at Stoke ; where he writ that beautiful little Ode which ſtands firſt in this collection of Poems. He ſent it as ſoon as written to his beloved friend ; but he was dead † before it reached Hertfordſhire. He died ‡ only twenty days after he had written the letter to Mr. Gray, which concluded with “ Vale, & vive pauper cum vivis.” So little was the amiable youth then aware of the ſhort time that he himſelf

\* There is ſo much of nature in the ſentiment, as well as poetry in the deſcription of this triumphal entry of young Maſſiniſſa, that it ſeems much to be regretted the author did not finiſh this Poem. But I believe he never proceeded further with it. I had therefore my doubts concerning the printing of ſo ſmall a part ; but as I thought it the beſt, becauſe the only original ſpecimen of Mr. Gray’s Ovidian verſe, the reſt of his Hexameters and Pentameters being only tranſlations either from Engliſh or Italian) I was willing to give it to the reader.

† This ſingular anecdote is founded on a marginal note in his common-place book, where that ode is tranſcribed, and the following memorandum annexed : “ Written at Stoke the beginning of June, 1742, and ſent to Mr. Weſt, not knowing he was then dead.”

‡ He was buried at Hatfield (the Houſe called Popes being in that pariſh). On a grave-ſtone in the chancel is the following plain inſcription : “ Here lieth the body of Richard Weſt, Eſq; only ſon to the Right Honourable Richard Weſt, Eſq; late Lord Chancellor of Ireland, who died the 1ſt of June, 1742, in the 26th year of his age.”



would be numbered amongst the living. But this is almost constantly the case with such persons as die of that most remediless, yet most flattering of all distempers, a Consumption. Shall Humanity be thankful or sorry that it is so? Thankful, surely. For as this malady generally attacks the Young and Innocent, it seems the merciful intention of Heaven that, to these, death should come unperceived, and as it were by stealth; divested of one of his sharpest stings, the lingering expectation of their dissolution. As to Mr. Gray, we may assure ourselves that he felt much more than his dying friend, when the letter, which inclosed the Ode, was returned unopened. There seems to be a kind of presentiment in that pathetic piece, which readers of taste will feel when they learn this anecdote; and which will make them read it with redoubled pleasure. It will also throw a melancholy grace (to borrow one of his own expressions) on the Ode on a distant prospect of Eton, and on that to Adversity; both of them written the August following: for as both these Poems abound with Pathos, those who have feeling hearts will feel this excellence the more strongly, when they know the cause from whence it arose; and the unfeeling will, perhaps, learn to respect what they cannot taste, when they are prevented from imputing to a splenetic melancholy, what in fact sprung from the most benevolent of all sensations. I am inclined to believe that the Elegy in a Country Church-yard was begun, if not concluded, at this time also: Though I am aware that, as it stands at present, the conclusion is of a later date; how that was originally, I shall shew in my notes on the poem. But the first impulse of his sorrow for the death of his friend, gave birth to a very tender Sonnet in English, on the Petrarchian model; and also to a  
sublime

sublime Apostrophe in Hexameters, written in the Genuine strain of Classical majesty, with which he intended to begin one of his books, "De Principiis Cogitandi." This I shall shortly give the Reader: But the sonnet, being completed, I reserve for publication amongst the rest of his Poems.

It may seem somewhat extraordinary, that Mr. Gray never attempted any thing in English verse, (except the beginning of Agrippina, and a few translations) before the first Ode lately mentioned. Shall we attribute this to his having been educated at Eton, or to what other cause? Certain it is, that when I first knew him, he seemed to set a greater value on his Latin poetry, than on that which he had composed in his native language; and had almost the same foible then, which I have since known him laugh at in Petrarch, when we read that most entertaining of all books, entitled "*Memoires pour la vie de François Petrarque tirés de-ses œuvres,*" &c. I am apt to think that the little popularity which M. de Polignac's *Anti-Lucretius* acquired, after it had been so long and so eagerly expected by the learned, induced Mr. Gray to lay aside his didactic Plan. However this may be, he writ no Latin verse after this period; except perhaps some part of the 1st book of the Poem just mentioned. This therefore seems the proper place to introduce that fragment; which being the most considerable in itself of all his Latin Compositions, and perhaps the most laboured of any of his Poems, it were to be wished that I could give the reader more insight into his design, than the few scattered papers which he has left, enable me to do. It is clear, however, from the Exordium itself, that he meant to make the same use of Mr. Locke's Essay on the human Understanding, which Lucretius did of the Dogmas of Epicurus.

Epicurus. And the first six lines plainly intimate, that his general design was to be comprized in four books.

The 1st. On the origin of our Ideas.

Unde Animus scire incipiat—

The 2d. On the distribution of these Ideas in the Memory.

——quibus inchoet orsa

Principiis seriem rerum, tenuemque catenam  
Mnemosyne——

The 3d. On the Province of Reason and its gradual improvement.

——Ratio unde, rudi sub pectore, tardum

Augeat imperium——

The 4th. On the Cause and Effects of the Passions.

—— & primum mortalibus ægris

Ira, Dolor, Metus, & Curæ nascantur inanes.

But he has not drawn out any of the Arguments of these Books, except a part of the first ; and that only so far as he executed of it. This it will be proper here to insert ; and also, for the ease of the reader, to repeat the several parts at the bottom of the subsequent pages.

General Plan of the Poem.—First, Invocation to Mr. Locke. Address to Favonius, shewing the use and importance of the design.—Beginning.—Connection of the soul and body ; Nerves, the instruments of sensation.—Touch, the first and most extensive sense, described.—Begins before the birth ; Pain, our first idea when born.—Seeing, the second sense. Digressive encomium of Light. The gradual opening and improvement of this sense, and that of Hearing, their connection with the higher faculties of the Mind ; Sense of Beauty and Order and Harmony annexed to them. From the latter, our delight in Eloquence, Poetry, and Music derived.—Office of the Taste and Smell.—Internal sense  
of

of Reflection, whereby the mind views its own powers and operations, compared to a young Woodnymph admiring herself in some fountain.—Admission of Ideas, some by a single sense, some by two, others by every way of Sensation and Reflection. Instance in a Person born blind, he has no ideas of Light and Colours ; but he has those of Figure, Motion, Extension, and Space, (objects both of the sight and touch.) Third sort, those which make their entrance into the mind by every channel alike ; as Pleasure, and Pain, Power, Existence, Unity and Succession. Properties of Bodies, whereby they make themselves known to us. Primary qualities : Magnitude, Solidity, Mobility, Texture, and Figure. \*\*\*

## DE PRINCIPIIS COGITANDI.

### LIBER PRIMUS.

#### Ad FAVONIUM.

**U**NDE Animus scire incipiat : quibus inchoet orsa  
Principiis seriem rerum, tenuemque catenam  
Mnemosyne : Ratio unde rudi sub pectore tardum  
Augeat imperium ; & primum mortalibus ægris  
Ira, Dolor, Metus, & Curæ nascantur inanes, 5  
Hinc canere aggredior. 2 Nec dedignare canentem,  
O decus ! Angliacæ certe o lux altera gentis !  
Si quâ primus iter monstras, vestigia conor  
Signare incertâ, tremulâque insistere plantâ. \*  
Quin potius duc ipse (potes namque omnia) sanctum 10  
Ad

<sup>1</sup> Plan of the Poem.—<sup>2</sup> Invocation to Mr. Locke.

\* It has been already observed in the Note on Letter 17. p. 35. that Mr. Gray's Hexameters, besides having the variety of



Ad limen, (si ritè adeo, si pectore puro,) 15  
 Obscuræ referans Naturæ ingentia claustra.  
 Tu cæcas rerum causas, fontemque severum  
 Pande, Pater; tibi enim, tibi, veri magne Sacerdos,  
 Corda patent hominum, atque altæ penetralia  
 Mentis.

Tuque aures adhibe vacuas, facilesque, Favonî,  
 (Quod tibi crescit opus) 3 simplex nec despice carmen,  
 Nec vatem: non illa læves primordia motus,  
 Quanquam parva, dabunt. Lætum vel amabile  
 quicquid

Usquam oritur, trahit hinc ortum; nec furgit ad  
 auras, 20

Quin ea conspirent simul, eventusque secudent.  
 Hinc variæ vitæ artes, ac mollior usus,  
 Dulce & amicitæ vinclum: Sapientia diâ  
 Hinc roseum accendit lumen, vultuque sereno  
 Humanas aperit mentes, nova gaudia monstrans, 15  
 Deformesque fugat curas, vanosque timores:  
 Scilicet & rerum crescit pulcherrima Virtus.  
 Illa etiam, quæ te (mirum) noctesque diesque  
 Assiduè fovet inspirans, linguamque sequentem  
 Temperat in numeros, atque horas mulcet inertes; 30  
 Aurea non aliâ se jactat origine Musa.

4 Principio, ut magnum fœdus Natura creatrix  
 Firmavit, tardis jussitque inolescere membris

<sup>3</sup> Use and Extent of the Subject.—4 Union of the Soul and Body.

of Virgil's Pauses, closed also with his Elisions. For Virgil, as an attentive reader will immediately perceive, generally introduces one Elision, and not unfrequently more, into those Lines which terminate the Sense. This gives to his Versification its last and most exquisite grace, and leaves the ear fully satisfied. Mr. Gray could not fail to observe, and of course to aim at this happy effect of Elisions in a concluding Line: of which the present Poem, in particular, affords indubitable and abundant proofs.

Sublimes

Sublimes animas ; tenebroso in carcere partem  
 Noluit ætheream longo torpere veterno : 35  
 Nec per se proprium passa exercere vigorem est,  
 Ne sociæ molis conjunctos sperneret artus,  
 Ponderis oblita, & cœlestis conscia flammæ.  
 Idcirco<sup>5</sup> innumero ductu tremere undique fibras  
 Nervorum instituit : tum toto corpore miscens 40  
 Implicuit latè ramos, & sensile textum,  
 Implevitque humore suo (seu lymphæ vocanda,  
 Sive aura est) tenuis certè, atque levissima quædam  
 Vis versatur agens, parvosque insusa canales  
 Perfluit ; assiduè externis quæ concita plagis, 45  
 Mobilis, incussique fidelis nuntia motûs,  
 Hinc indè accensâ contrage relabitur usque  
 Ad superas hominis sedes, arcemque cerebri.  
 Namque illuc posuit solium, & sua templa sacravit  
<sup>6</sup> Mens animi : hanc circum coeunt, densoque fe-  
 runtur 50

Agmine notitiæ, simulacraque tenuia rerum :  
 Ecce autem naturæ ingens aperitur imago  
 Immensæ, variique patent commercia mundi.  
 Ac uti longinquis descendunt montibus amnes  
 Velivulus Tamisis, flaventisque Indus arenæ, 55  
 Euphratesque, Tagusque, & opimo flumine Ganges,  
 Undas quisque suas volvens, cursuque sonoro  
 In mare prorumpunt : hos magno acclinis in antro  
 Excipit Oceanus, natorumque ordine longo  
 Dona recognoscit venientium, ultròque serenat 60  
 Cærulem faciem, & diffuso marmore ridet.

Haud aliter species properant se inferre novellæ  
 Certatim menti, atque aditus quino agmine complent.  
 7 Primas tactus agit partes, primusque minutæ  
 Laxat iter cæcum turbæ, recipitque ruentem. 65

<sup>5</sup> Office of the nervous System.—<sup>6</sup> Sensation, the Origin of  
 our Ideas.—<sup>7</sup> The Touch, our first and most extensive Sense.

Non idem huic modus est, qui fratribus : amplius ille  
 Imperium affectat senior, penitusque medullis,  
 Visceribusque habitat totis, pellisque recentem  
 Funditur in telam, & latè per stamina vivit.  
 Necdum etiam matris puer eluctatus ab alvo 70  
 Multiplices solvit tunicas, & vincula rupit ;  
 Sopitus molli somno, tepidoque liquore  
 Circumfusus adhuc : tactus tamen aura laceffit  
 Jamdudum levior sensus, animamque recludit.  
 Idque magis simul, ac solitum blandumque calorem 75  
 Frigore mutavit cœli, quod verberat acri  
 Impete inassuetos artus : tum sævior adstat,  
 Humanæque comes vitæ Dolor excipit ; ille  
 Cunctantem frustra & tremulo multa ore querentem  
 Corripit invadens, ferreisque amplectitur ulnis. 80  
 8 Tum species primum patefacta est candida Lucis  
 (Usque vices adeo Natura bonique, malique,  
 Exæquat, justæque manu sua damna rependit)  
 Tum primum, ignotosque bibunt nova lumina soles.  
 9 Carmine quo, Dea, te dicam, gratissima cœli 85  
 Progenies, ortumque tuum ; gemmantia rore  
 Ut per prata levi lustras, & floribus halans  
 Purpureum Veris gremium, scenamque virentem  
 Pingis, & umbriferos colles, & cærula regna ?  
 Gratia te, Venerisque Lepos, & mille Colorum, 90  
 Formarumque chorus sequitur, Morusque decentes.  
 At caput invisum Stygiis Nox atra tenebris  
 Abdidit, horrendæque simul Formidinis ora,  
 Pervigilesque æstus Curarum, atque anxius Angor :  
 Undique Lætitiâ florent mortalia corda, 95  
 Purus & aridet largis fulgoribus Æther.  
 Omnia nec tu ideo invalidæ se pandere Menti  
 (Quippe nimis teneros posset vis tanta diei

\* Sight, our second Sense.—— Digression on Light.

Perturbare,

Perturbare, & inexpertos confundere visus)  
 Nec capere infantes animos, neu cernere credas 100  
 Tam variam molem, & miræ spectacula lucis :  
 10 Nescio quâ tamen hæc oculos dulcedine parvos  
 Splendida percussit novitas, traxitque sequentes ;  
 Nonne videmus enim, latis inserta fenestris  
 Sicubi se Phœbi dispergant aurea tela, 110

Sive Lucernarum rutilus colluxerit ardor,  
 Extemplo hûc obverti aciem, quæ fixa repertos  
 Haurit inexpletum radios, fruiturque tuendo.  
 Altior hûc verò sensu, majorque videtur  
 Addita, Judicioque arctè connexa potestas, 110  
 Quod simul atque ætas volventibus auxerit annis,  
 11 Hæsci mul, assiduo depascens omniavisu,  
 Perspiciet, vis quanta loci, quid polleat ordo,  
 Juncturæ quis honos, ut res accendere rebus  
 Lumina conjurant inter se, & mutua fulgent. 115

Nec minor 12 in geminis viget auribus insita virtus,  
 Nec tantum in curvis quæ pervigil excubet antris  
 Hinc atque hinc (ubi Vox tremefecerit ostia pulsu  
 Aërii in vecta rotis) longèque recurset :  
 Scilicet Éloquio hæc sonitus, hæc fulminis alas, 120  
 Et mulcere dedit dictis & tollere corda,  
 Verbaque metiri numeris, versuque ligare  
 Repperit, & quicquid discant Libethrides undæ,  
 Calliope quotiès, quotiès Pater ipse canendi  
 Evolvat liquidum carmen, calamove loquenti 125  
 Inspiret dulces animas, digitisque figuret.

12 At medias fauces, & linguæ humentia templa  
 Gustus habet, quâ se insinuet jucunda saporum  
 Luxuries, dona Autumni, Bacchique voluptas.

10 Sight, imperfect at first, gradually improves.—11 Ideas of Beauty, Proportion, and Order.—12 Hearing, also improveable by the Judgment.—13 Taste,



14 Naribus interea confedit odora hominum vis, 130  
 Docta leves captare auras, Panchaia quales  
 Vere novo exhalat, Floræve quod oscula fragrant.  
 Roscida, cum Zephyri furtim sub vesperis horâ.  
 Respondet votis, mollemque aspirat amorem.

15 Tot portas altæ capitis circumdedit arci 135  
 Alma Parens, sensûsque vias per membra reclusit;  
 Haud solas: namque intus agit vivata facultas,  
 Quâ sese explorat, contemplatusque repenti.  
 Ipse suas animus vires, momentaque cernit.  
 Quid velit, aut possit, cupiat, fugiatve, vicissim 140  
 Percipit imperio gaudens; neque corpora fallunt  
 Morigera ad celeres actus, ac numina mentis.

Qualis Hamadryadum quondam si fortè sororum  
 Una, novos peragrans saltus, & devia rura;  
 (Atque illam in viridi suadet procumbere ripâ 145  
 Fontis pura quies, & opaci frigoris umbra).  
 Dum prona in latices speculi de margine pendet,  
 Mirata est subitam venienti occurrere Nympham:  
 Mox eosdem, quos ipsa, artus, eadem ora gerentem  
 Unâ inferre gradus, unâ succedere sylvæ 150  
 Aspicit alludens; seseque agnoscit in undis.  
 Sic sensu interno rerum simulacra suarum.  
 Mens ciet, & proprios observat conscia vultus.

16 Nee verò simplex ratio, aut jus omnibus unum  
 Constat imaginibus. Sunt quæ bina ostia nôrunt; 155  
 Hæ privos servant aditus; sine legibus illæ  
 Passim, quâ data porta, ruunt, animoque propinquant.  
 17 Respice, cui a cunis tristes extinxit ocellos,  
 Sæva & in æternas merfit naturâ tenebras:  
 Illi ignota dies lucet, vernusque colorum 160  
 Offusus nitor est, & vivæ gratia formæ.

14 Smell.—15 Reflection, the other Source of our Ideas—  
 16 Ideas approach the Soul, some by single Avenues, some by  
 single Avenues, some by two, others by the Sense.—17 Il-  
 lustration.—Light, an example of the first.

18 Corporis at filum, & motus, spatiumque, locique  
Intervalla datur certo dignoscere tactu :

Quandoquidem his iter ambiguum est, & janua duplex,  
Exclusæque oculis species irrumperè tendunt 165

Per digitos. Atqui solis concessa potestas

Luminibus blandæ est radios immittere lucis.

19 Undique proporrò sociis, quacunque patescit

Notitiæ campus, mistæ lasciva feruntur

Turba voluptatis comites, formæque dolorum 170

Terribiles visu, & portâ glomerantur in omni.

20 Nec vario minus introitu magnum ingruit Illud,

Quo facere & fungi, quo res existere circum

Quamque sibi proprio cum corpore scimus, & ire

Ordine, perpetuoque per ævum flumine labi. 175

Nunc age quo valeat pacto, quâ sensibilis arte

21 Affectare viam, atque animi tentare latebras

Materies (dictis aures adverte faventes)

Exsequar. Imprimis spatii quam multa per æquor

Millia multigenis pandant se corpora seclis, 180

Expende. Haud unum invenies, quod mente licebit

Amplecti, nedum propriùs deprendere sensu,

22 Molis egens certæ, aut solido sine robore, cujus

Denique mobilitas linquit, texturave partes,

Ulla nec orarum circumcæsuræ coërcet. 185

Hæc conjuncta adeò totâ compage fatetur :

Mundus, & extremo clamant in limine rerum,

(Si rebus datur Extremum) primordia. Firmat

Hæc eadem tactus (tactum quis dicere falsum

Audeat ?) hæc oculi nec lucidus arguit orbis. 190

Inde potestatum enasci densissima proles ;

Nam quodcunque ferit visum, tangive laborat,

Quicquid nare bibis, vel concava concipit auris,

18 Figure, Motion, Extension, of the second.—19 Pleasure,  
Pain, of the third.—20 Also Power, Existence, Unity,  
Succession, Duration.—21 Primary Qualities of Bodies.

—22 Magnitude, Solidity, Mobility, Texture, Figure.  
Quicquid

Quicquid lingua sapit, credas hoc omne, necesse est  
 Ponderibus, textu, discursu, ipse, figurâ 195  
 Particulas præstare leves, & semina rerum.  
 Nunc oculos igitur pascunt, & luce ministrâ  
 Fulgere cuncta vides, spargique coloribus orbem,  
 Dum de sole trahunt alias, aliasque supernè  
 Detorquent, retròque docent se vertere flammâs. 200  
 Nunc trepido inter se fervent corpuscula pulsa,  
 Ut tremor æthera per magnum, latèque natantes  
 Aurarum fluctus avidi vibrantia claustra  
 Auditûs queat allabi, sonitumque propaget.  
 Cominûs interdum non ullo interprete per se 205  
 Nervorum invadunt teneras quatientia fibras,  
 Sensiferumque urgent ultrò per viscera motum.

\* \* \*

## DE PRINCIPIIS COGITANDI.

## LIBER QUARTUS.

**H**ACTENUS haud segnis Naturæ arcana retexi  
 Musarum interpres, primusque Britannia per arva  
 Romano liquidum deduxi flumine rivum.  
 Cum Tu opere in medio, spes tanti & causa laboris,  
 Linquis, & æternam fati te condis in unbram ! 5  
 Vidi egomet duro graviter concussa dolore  
 Pectora, in alterius non unquam lenta dolorem ;  
 Et languere oculos vidi, & pallescere amantem  
 Vultum, quo nunquam Pietas nisi rara, Fidesque,  
 Altus amor Veri, & purum spirabat Honestum. 10  
 Visa tamen tardi demùm inclementia morbi  
 Cessare est, reducemque iterum roseo ore Salutem  
 Speravi, atque unâ tecum, dilecte Favoni !  
 Credulus heu longos, ut quondâm, fallere Soles :  
 Heu spes nequicquam dulces, atque irrita vota !

Heu

Heu mæstos Soles, sine te quos ducere flendo  
Per desideria, & questus jam cogor inanes !

At Tu, sancta anima, & nostri non indiga luctûs,  
Stellanti templo, sincerique ætheris igne,  
Unde orta es, frueri ; atque o si secura, nec ultra 20  
Mortalis, notos olim miserata labores  
Respectes, tenuesque vacet cognoscere curas ;  
Humanam si fortè altâ de sede procellam  
Contemplêre, metus, stimulosque cupidinis acres,  
Gaudiaque & gemitus, parvoque in corde tumultum 25  
Irarum ingentem, & sævos sub pectore fluctus ;  
Respice & has lacrymas, memori quas ictus amore  
Fundo ; quod possum, juxtâ lugere sepulchrum  
Dum juvat, & mutæ vana hæc jactare favillæ.

\* \* \*

END OF THE THIRD SECTION.

S E C-



## SECTION THE FOURTH.

THE three foregoing Sections have carried the Reader through the juvenile part of Mr. Gray's life, and nearly, alas, to half of its duration. Those which remain, though less diversified by incidents, will, notwithstanding, I flatter myself, be equally instructive and amusing, as several of his most intimate friends have very kindly furnished me with their collections of his letters; which, added to those I have myself preserved, will enable me to select from them many excellent specimens of his more mature judgment, correct taste, and extensive learning, blended at the same time with many amiable instances of his sensibility: they will also specify the few remaining anecdotes, which occurred in a life so retired and sedentary as his: for the reader must be here informed that, from the winter of the year 1742 to the day of his death, his principal residence was at Cambridge. He indeed, during the lives of his mother and aunts, spent his summer vacations at Stoke; and, after they died, in making little tours on visits to his friends in different parts of the country: But he was seldom absent from college any considerable time, except between the years 1759 and 1762; when, on the opening of the British Museum, he took lodgings in Southampton Row, in order to have recourse to the Harleian

and

and other Manuscripts there deposited, from which he made several curious extracts \*.

It may seem strange that a person who had conceived so early a dislike to Cambridge, and who (as we shall see presently) now returned to it with this prejudice rather augmented, should, when he was free to choose, make that very place his principal abode for near thirty years: But this I think may be easily accounted for from his love of books, (ever his ruling passion) and the straitness of his circumstances which prevented the gratification of it. For to a man, who could not conveniently purchase even a small library, what situation so eligible as that which affords free access to a number of large ones? This reason also accounts for another singular fact. We have seen that, during his residence at Stoke, in the spring and summer of this same year 1742, he writ a considerable part of his more finished poems. Hence one would be naturally led to conclude that, on his return to Cambridge, when the ceremony of taking his degree was over, the quiet of the place would have prompted him to continue the cultivation of his poetical talents, and that immediately, as the Muse seems in this year to have peculiarly inspired him; but this was not the case. Reading, he has often told me, was much more agreeable to him than writing: He therefore now laid aside composition almost entirely, and applied himself with intense assiduity to the study of the best Greek

\* These, amounting in all to a tolerably sized folio, are at present in Mr. Walpole's hands. He has already printed the speech of Sir Thomas Wyat from them in the second number of his *Miscellaneous Antiquities*. The Public must impute it to their own want of curiosity if more of them do not appear in print.

authors ; infomuch that, in the space of about six years, there were hardly any writers of note in that language which he had not only read but digested ; remarking, by the mode of common-place, their contents, their difficult and corrupt passages, and all this with the accuracy of a critic added to the diligence of a student.

Before I insert the next series of letters, I must take the liberty to mention, that it was not till about the year 1747 that I had the happiness of being introduced to the acquaintance of Mr. Gray. Some very juvenile imitations of Milton's juvenile poems, which I had written a year or two before, and of which the Monody on Mr. Pope's death was the principal \*, he then, at the request of one of my friends, was so obliging as to revise. The same year, on account of a dispute which had happened between the master and fellows of Pembroke Hall, I had the honour of being nominated by the Fellows to fill one of the vacant Fellowships †. I was at this time scholar of St. John's College, and Bachelor of Arts, personally unknown to the gentlemen who favoured me so highly ; therefore that they gave me this mark of distinction and preference was greatly owing to Mr. Gray, who was well acquaint-

\* The other two were in imitation of "l'Allegro & il Penseroso," and intitled "Il Bellicoso & il Pacifico." The latter of these I was persuaded to revise and publish in the Cambridge Collection of Verses on the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, 1748. The former has since got into a Miscellany, printed by G. Pearch, from the indiscretion, I suppose, of some acquaintance who had a copy of it.

† Tho' nominated in 1747, I was not elected Fellow till February, 1749. The Master having refused his assent, claiming a negative, the affair was therefore not compromised till after an ineffectual litigation of two years.

ed with several of that society, and to Dr. Heberden, whose known partiality to every, even the smallest degree of merit, led him warmly to second his recommendation. The Reader, I hope, will excuse this short piece of egotism, as it is written to express my gratitude, as well to the living as the dead, to declare the sense I shall ever retain of the honour which the Fellows of Pembroke Hall then did me, and to particularize the time of an incident which brought me into the neighbourhood of Mr. Gray's College; and served to give that cement to our future intimacy, which is usually rendered stronger by proximity of place.

The Letters, which I select for this section, are from the date of the year 1742 to that of 1768, when Mr. Gray was made Professor of Modern History. This, as it is a considerable interval of time, will perhaps require me the more frequently to resume my narrative; especially as I cannot now produce one continued chain of correspondence.

## L E T T E R I.

Mr. GRAY to \*Dr. WHARTON.

*Cambridge, Dec. 27, 1742.*

I Ought to have returned you my thanks a long time ago for the pleasure, I should say prodigy, of your Letter; for such a thing has not happened

\* Of Old-Park, near Durham. With this Gentleman Mr. Gray contracted an acquaintance very early; and though they were not educated together at Eton, yet afterwards at Cambridge, when the Doctor was Fellow of Pembroke Hall, they became intimate friends, and continued so to the time of Mr. Gray's death.

above



above twice within this last age to mortal man, and no one here can conceive what it may portend. You have heard, I suppose, how I have been employed a part of the time ; how, by my own indefatigable application for these ten years past, and by the care and vigilance of that worthy magistrate the Man in Blue \*, (who, I assure you, has not spared his labour, nor could have done more for his own Son) I am got half way to the top of Jurisprudence †, and bid as fair as another body to open a case of impotency with all decency and circumspection. You see my ambition. I do not doubt but some thirty years hence I shall convince the world and you that I am a very pretty young fellow ; and may come to shine in a profession, perhaps the noblest of all except man-midwifery. As for you, if your distemper and you can but agree about going to London, I may reasonably expect in a much shorter time to see you in your three-cornered villa, doing the honours of a well-furnished table with as much dignity, as rich a mien, and as capacious a belly as Dr. Mead. Methinks I see Dr. \* \*, at the lower end of it, lost in admiration of your goodly person and parts, cramming down his Envy (for it will rise) with the wing of a pheasant, and drowning it in neat Burgundy. But not to tempt your Asthma too much with such a prospect, I should think you might be almost as happy and as great as this even in the country. But you know best, and I should be sorry to say any thing that might stop you in the career of Glory ; far be it from me to hamper the wheels of

\* A Servant of the Vice-Chancellors for the time being, usually known by the name of Blue Coat, whose business it is to attend Acts for Degrees, &c.

† i. e. Batchelor of Civil Law.

your gilded chariot. Go on, Sir Thomas; and when you die, (for even Physicians must die) may the faculty in Warwick-lane erect your statue in the very niche of Sir John Cutler's.

I was going to tell you how sorry I am for your illness, but I hope it is too late now: I can only say that I really was very sorry. May you live a hundred Christmasses, and eat as many collars of brawn stuck with rosemary. Adieu, &c.

---

Though I have said that Mr. Gray, on his return to Cambridge, laid aside Poetry almost entirely, yet I find amongst his papers a small fragment in verse, which bears internal evidence that it was written about this very time. The foregoing Letter, in which he employs so much of his usual vein of ridicule on the University, seems to be no improper introduction to it: I shall therefore insert it here without making any apology, as I have given one, on a similar occasion, in the first section.

It seems to have been intended as a Hymn or Address to ignorance; and I presume, had he proceeded with it, would have contained much good Satire upon false Science and scholastic Pedantry. What he writ of it is purely introductory; yet many of the lines are so strong, and the general cast of versification so musical, that I believe it will give the generality of Readers a higher opinion of his poetical Talents, than many of his Lyrical Productions have done. I speak of the Generality; because it is a certain fact, that their taste is founded upon the ten-syllable couplets of Dryden and Pope, and upon these only.

**H**AIL, Horrors, hail ! ye ever gloomy bowers,  
 Ye gothic fanes, and antiquated towers,  
 Where rushy Camus' slowly-winding flood  
 Perpetual draws his humid train of mud :  
 Glad I revisit thy neglected reign,  
 Oh take me to thy peaceful shade again.

But chiefly thee, whose influence breath'd from high  
 Augments the native darkness of the sky ;  
 Ah ! Ignorance ! soft salutary Power !  
 Prostrate with filial reverence I adore.  
 Thrice hath Hyperion roll'd his annual race,  
 Since weeping I forsook thy fond embrace.  
 Oh say, successful do'st thou still oppose  
 Thy leaden Ægis 'gainst our antient foes ?  
 Still stretch, tenacious of thy right divine,  
 The massy sceptre o'er thy slumb'ring line ?  
 And dews Lethean thro' the land dispense  
 To steep in slumbers each benighted sense ?  
 If any spark of Wit's delusive ray  
 Break out, and flash a momentary day,  
 With damp, cold touch forbid it to aspire,  
 And huddle up in fogs the dangerous fire.

Oh say—she hears me not, but careless grown,  
 Lethargic nods upon her ebony throne.  
 Goddess ! awake, arise, alas my fears !  
 Can powers immortal feel the force of years ?  
 Not thus of old, with ensigns wide unfurl'd,  
 She rode triumphant o'er the vanquish'd world ;  
 Fierce nations own'd her unresisted might,  
 And all was Ignorance, and all was Night.

Oh sacred Age ! O Times for ever lost !  
 (The School-man's glory, and the Church-man's  
 boast.)

For ever gone—yet still to Fancy new,  
 Her rapid wings the transient scene pursue,  
 And bring the buried ages back to view.

}  
 High

High on her car, behold the Grandam ride  
Like old Sesostris with barbaric pride ;

\*\*\*\* a team of harness'd monarchs bend

\*\*\*\*\*

## L E T T E R II.

Mr. GRAY to Dr. WHARTON.

*Peterhouse, April 26, 1744.*

**Y**OU write so feelingly to Mr. Brown, and represent your abandoned condition in terms so touching, that what gratitude could not effect in several months, compassion has brought about in a few days ; and broke that strong attachment, or rather allegiance, which I and all here owe to our sovereign Lady and Mistress, the President of Presidents and Head of Heads, (if I may be permitted to pronounce her name, that ineffable Octogrammaton) the power of Laziness. You must know she had been pleased to appoint me (in preference to so many old servants of her's who had spent their whole lives in qualifying themselves for the office) Grand Picker of straws and Push-pin Player to her Supinity (for that is her title). The first is much in the nature of Lord President of the Council ; and the other, like the Groom-Porter, only without the profit ; but as they are both things of very great honour in this country, I considered with myself the load of envy attending such great charges ; and besides, between you and me) I found myself unable to support the fatigue of keeping up the appearance that persons of such dignity must do, so I thought proper to decline it, and excused myself as well as I could. How-



ever, as you see such an affair must take up a good deal of time, and it has always been the policy of this court to proceed slowly, like the Imperial and that of Spain, in the dispatch of Business, you will on this account the easier forgive me, if I have not answered your Letter before.

You desire to know, it seems, what Character the Poem of your young friend bears here \*. I wonder that you ask the opinion of a Nation, where those, who pretend to judge, do not judge at all ; and the rest (the wiser part) wait to catch the judgment of the world immediately above them ; that is, Dick's and the Rainbow Coffee-houses. Your readier way would be to ask the Ladies that keep the Bars in those two theatres of Criticism. However to shew you that I am a judge as well as my Countrymen, I will tell you, though I have rather turned it over than read it, (but no matter ; no more have they) that it seems to me above the midling ; and now and then, for a little while, rises even to the best, particularly in description. It is often obscure, and even unintelligible ; and too much infected with the Hutchinson jargon. In short, its great fault is, that it was published at least nine years too early. And so methinks in a few words, "*à la mode du Temple*," I have very pertly dispatched what perhaps may for several years have employed a very ingenious man worth fifty of myself.

\* Pleasures of the Imagination : from the posthumous publication of Dr. Akinfide's Poems, it should seem that the Author had very much the same Opinion afterwards of his own Work, which Mr. Gray here expresses : since he undertook a reform of it which must have given him, had he concluded it, as much trouble as if he had written it entirely new.

You

You are much in the right to have a taste for Socrates ; he was a divine man. I must tell you, by way of news of the place, that the other day a certain new Professor made an Apology for him an hour long in the schools ; and all the world brought in Socrates guilty, except the people of his own College.

The muse is gone, and left me in far worse company ; if she returns, you will hear of her. As to her child \* (since you are so good as to enquire after it) it is but a puling chit yet, not a bit grown to speak of ; I believe, poor thing, it has got the worms that will carry it off at last. Mr. Trollope and I are in a course of Tar-Water ; he for his present, and I for my future distempers. If you think it will kill me, send away a man and horse directly ; for I drink like a Fish. Your's, &c.

### L E T T E R III.

Mr. GRAY to Dr. WHARTON.

*Cambridge, Dec. 11, 1746.*

**I** Would make you an excuse, (as indeed I ought) if they were a sort of thing I ever gave any credit to myself in these cases ; but I know they are never true. Nothing so silly as Indolence when it hopes to disguise itself : every one knows it by its saunter, as they do his Majesty (God bless him) at a Masquerade, by the firmness of his tread and the elevation of his chin. However, somewhat I had to say that has a little shadow of reason in it. I have been in Town (I suppose you know) flaunting about

\* He here means his Poem "De Principiis Cogitandi." See the last Section.

at all kind of public places with two friends lately returned from abroad. The world itself has some attractions in it to a solitary of six years standing ; and agreeable well-meaning people of sense (thank Heaven there are so few of them) are my peculiar Magnet. It is no wonder then if I felt some reluctance at parting with them so soon ; or if my spirits, when I returned back to my cell, should sink for a time, not indeed to storm and tempest, but a good deal below changeable. Besides, Seneca says (and my pitch of philosophy does not pretend to be much above Seneca) " *Nunquam mores, quos extuli, refero. Aliquid ex eo quod composui, turbatur : aliquid ex his, quæ fugavi, redit.*" And it will happen to such as us, mere imps of Science. Well it may, when Wisdom herself is forced often

In sweet retired Solitude

To plume her feathers, and let grow her wings,  
That in the various bustle of Resort  
Were all too ruffled, and sometimes impair'd.

It is a foolish thing that without Money one cannot either live as one pleases, or where and with whom one pleases. Swift somewhere says, that Money is Liberty ; and I fear Money is Friendship too and Society, and almost every external blessing. It is a great, though an ill-natured Comfort, to see most of those who have it in plenty, without Pleasure, without Liberty, and without Friends.

I am not altogether of your opinion as to your historical consolation in time of trouble : A calm Melancholy it may produce, a stiller sort of despair (and that only in some circumstances, and on some constitutions) ; but I doubt no real comfort or content

ment can ever arise in the human mind, but from Hope.

I take it very ill you should have been in the twentieth year of the War\*, and yet say nothing of the retreat before Syracuse: Is it, or is it not, the finest thing you ever read in your life? And how does Xenophon or Plutarch agree with you? For my part I read Aristotle, his Poetics, Politics, and Morals; though I do not well know which is which. In the first place, he is the hardest author by far I ever meddled with. Then he has a dry conciseness, that makes one imagine one is perusing a table of contents rather than a book: it tastes for all the world like chop'd hay, or rather like chop'd logic; for he has a violent affection to that art, being in some sort his own invention; so that he often loses himself in little trifling distinctions and verbal niceties; and, what is worse, leaves you to extricate him as well as you can. Thirdly, he has suffered vastly from the transcribers, as all authors of great brevity necessarily must. Fourthly and lastly, he has abundance of fine uncommon things, which make him well worth the pains he gives one. You see what you are to expect from him.

#### LETTER IV.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WALPOLE.

*Cambridge, 1747.*

I Had been absent from this place a few days, and at my return found Cibber's book† upon my  
H 4 table,

\* Thucydides, L. vii.

† Entitled "Observations on Cicero's Character," or some such



table : I return you my thanks for it, and have already run over a considerable part ; for who could resist Mrs. Letitia Pilkington's recommendation ? (By the way, is there any such gentlewoman † ? or has somebody put on the style of a scribbling woman's panegyric to deceive and laugh at Colley ?) He seems to me full as pert and as dull as usual. There are whole pages of common-place stuff, that for stupidity might have been wrote by Dr. Waterland, or any other grave divine, did not the flirting saucy phrase give them at a distance an air of youth and gaiety : It is very true, he is often in the right with regard to Tully's weaknesses ; but was there any one that did not see them ? Those, I imagine, that would find a man after God's own heart, are no more likely to trust the Doctor's recommendation than the Player's ; and as to Reason and Truth, would they know their own faces, do you think, if they looked in the glass, and saw themselves so bedizened in tattered fringe and tarnished lace, in French jewels, and dirty furbelows, the frippery of a stroller's wardrobe ?

Literature, to take it in its most comprehensive sense, and include every thing that requires invention or judgment, or barely application and industry, seems indeed drawing apace to its dissolution, and remarkably since the beginning of the war. I remember to have read Mr. Spence's pretty book ; though (as he then had not been at Rome for the last time) it must have increased greatly since that in bulk. If you ask me what I read, I protest I do

such thing ; for I have not the book by me, and it has been long since forgot.

† This Lady made herself more known sometime after the date of this letter.

not recollect one syllable ; but only in general, that they were the best bred sort of men in the world, just the kind of *frinds* one would wish to meet in a fine summer's evening, if one wished to meet any at all. The heads and tails of the dialogues, published separate in 16<sup>mo</sup>, would make the sweetest reading in *natiur* for young gentlemen of family and fortune, that are learning to dance\*. I rejoice to hear there is such a crowd of dramatical performances coming upon the stage. Agrippina can stay very well, she thanks you, and be damned at leisure : I hope in God you have not mentioned, or shewed to any body that scene (for trusting in its badness, I forgot to caution you concerning it) ; but I heard the other day, that I was writing a Play, and was told the name of it, which nobody here could know, I am sure. The employment you propose to me much better suits my inclination ; but I much fear our joint-stock would hardly compose a small volume ; what I have is less considerable than you would imagine, and of that little we should not be willing to publish all. \* \* \* †

H 5

This

\* This ridicule on the Platonic way of dialogue (as it was aimed to be, tho' nothing less resembles it) is, in my opinion, admirable. Lord Shaftsbury was the first who brought it into vogue, and Mr. Spence (if we except a few Scotch writers) the last who practised it. As it has now been laid aside some years, we may hope, for the sake of true taste, that this frippery mode of composition will never come into fashion again ; especially since Dr. Hurd has pointed out, by example as well as precept, wherein the true beauty of Dialogue-writing consists.

† What is here omitted was a short catalogue of Mr. West's poetry then in Mr. Gray's hands ; the reader has seen as much of it in the three foregoing sections as I am persuaded his friend

This is all I can any where find. You, I imagine, may have a good deal more. I should not care how unwise the ordinary run of readers might think my affection for him, provided those few, that ever loved any body, or judged of any thing rightly, might, from such little remains, be moved to consider what he would have been ; and to wish that heaven had granted him a longer life and a mind more at ease.

I send you a few lines, tho' Latin, which you do not like, for the sake of the subject \* ; it makes part of a large design, and is the beginning of the fourth book, which was intended to treat of the passions. Excuse the three first verses ; you know vanity, with the Romans, is a poetical license.

## L E T T E R V.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WALPOLE.

*Cambridge, 1747.*

**I** Have abundance of thanks to return you for the entertainment Mr. Spence's book has given me,

friend would have published, had he prosecuted the task which Mr. Walpole recommended to him, that of printing his own and Mr. West's Poems in the same volume ; and which we also perceive from this letter, he was not averse from doing. This therefore seems to vindicate the Editor's plan in arranging these papers ; as he is enabled by it not only to shew what Mr. West would have been, but what Mr. Gray was, I mean not as a Poet, for that the world knew before, but as an universal Scholar, and (what is still of more consequence) as an excellent moral Man.

\* The admirable Apostrophe to Mr. West, see page 162.

which

which I have almost run over already ; and I much fear (see what it is to make a figure) the breadth of the margin, and the neatness of the prints, which are far better done than one could expect, have prevailed upon me to like it far better than I did in manuscript ; for I think it is not the very genteel deportment of Polymetis, nor the lively wit of Mysagetes, that have at all corrupted me.

There is one fundamental fault, from whence most of the little faults throughout the whole arise. He professes to neglect the Greek writers, who could have given him more instruction on the very heads he professes to treat, than all the others put together ; who does not know, that upon the Latin, the Sabine, and Hetruscan mythology (which probably might themselves, at a remoter period of time, owe their origin to Greece too) the Romans ingrafted almost the whole religion of Greece to make what is called their own ? It would be hard to find any one circumstance that is properly of their invention. In the ruder days of the republic, the picturesque part of their religion (which is the province he has chose, and would be thought to confine himself to) was probably borrowed entirely from the Tuscans, who, as a wealthy and trading people, may be well supposed, and indeed are known, to have had the arts flourishing in a considerable degree among them. What could inform him here, but Dio. Halicarnassus (who expressly treats of those times with great curiosity and industry) and the remains of the first Roman writers ? The former he has neglected as a Greek ; and the latter, he says, were but little acquainted with the arts, and consequently are but of small authority. In the better ages,  
when



when every temple and public building in Rome was peopled with imported deities and heroes, and when all the artists of reputation they made use of were Greeks, what wonder, if their eyes grew familiarised to Grecian forms and habits (especially in a matter of this kind, where so much depends upon the imagination); and if those figures introduced with them belief of such fables, as first gave them being, and dressed them out in their various attributes, it was natural then, and (I should think) necessary, to go to the source itself, the Greek accounts of their own religion; but, to say the truth, I suspect he was little conversant in those books and that language; for he rarely quotes any but Lucian, an author that falls in every body's way, and who lived at the very extremity of that period he has set to his enquiries, later than any of the poets he has meddled with, and for that reason ought to have been regarded as but an indifferent authority; especially being a Syrian too. His book (as he says himself) is, I think, rather a beginning than a perfect work; but a beginning at the wrong end: For if any body should finish it by enquiring into the Greek mythology, as he proposes, it will be necessary to read it backward.

There are several little neglects, that one might have told him of, which I noted in reading it hastily; of page 311, a discourse about orange-trees, occasioned by Virgil's "*inter odoratum lauri nemus*," where he fancies the Roman *Laurus* to be our Laurel; tho' undoubtedly the bay-tree, which is *odoratum*, and (I believe) still called *Lauro*, or *Alhoro*, at Rome, and that the "*Malum Medicum*" in the Georgick is the orange; tho' Theophrastus, whence Virgil borrowed it, or even Pliny whom  
he

he himself quotes, might convince him it is the cedrato which he has often tasted at Florence. Page 144 is an account of Domenichino's Cardinal Virtues, and a fling at the Jesuits, neither of which belong to them: The painting is in a church of the Barnibiti, dedicated to St. Carlo Borromeo, whose motto is HUMILITAS. Page 151, in a note, he says the old Romans did not regard Fortune as a Deity; tho' Servius Tullius (whom she was said to be in love with; nay, there was actually an affair between them) founded her temple in Foro Boario. By the way, her worship was Greek, and this king was educated in the family of Tarquinius Priscus, whose father was a Corinthian; so it is easy to conceive how early the religion of Rome might be mixed with that of Greece, &c. &c.

Dr. Middleton has sent to me to-day a book on the Roman Senate, the substance of a dispute between Lord Hervey and him, tho' it never interrupted *their* friendship, he says, and I dare say not.

## L E T T E R VI.

Mr. GRAY to Mr WAPLOLE.

*Cambridge, March 1, 1747.*

AS one ought to be particularly careful to avoid blunders in a compliment of condolence, it would be a sensible satisfaction to me (before I testify my sorrow, and the sincere part I take in your misfortune) to know for certain, who it is I lament. I knew Z ara and Selima, (Selima, was it? or Fatima) or rather I knew them both together; for I cannot

not justly say which was which. Then as to your handsome Cat, the name you distinguish her by, I am no less at a loss, as well knowing one's handsome cat is always the cat one likes best; or, if one be alive and the other dead, it is usually the latter that is the handsomest. Besides, if the point were never so clear, I hope you do not think me so ill-bred or so imprudent as to forfeit all my interest in the survivor: Oh no! I would rather seem to mistake, and imagine to be sure it must be the tabby one that had met with this sad accident. Till this affair is a little better determined, you will excuse me if I do not begin to cry:

"Tempus inane peto, requiem, spatiumque doloris."

Which interval is the more convenient, as it gives time to rejoice with you on your new honors\*. This is only a beginning; I reckon next week we shall hear you are a Free-Mason, or a Gormogon at least — Heigh ho! I feel (as you to be sure have done long since) that I have very little to say, at least in prose. Somebody will be the better for it; I do not mean you, but your Cat, feuë Mademoiselle Selime, whom I am about to immortalize for one week or fortnight, as follows\*\*\*\*\*. There's a Poem for you, it is rather too long for an Epitaph.

\* Mr. Walpole was about this time elected a Fellow of the Royal Society.

\*\* The reader need hardly be told, that the 4th Ode in the Collection of his Poems was inserted in the place of these asterisks. This letter (as some other slight ones have been) is printed chiefly to mark the date of one of his compositions.

L E T

## L E T T E R VII.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WHARTON.

*Stoke, June 5, 1745.*

**Y**OUR friendship has interested itself in my affairs so naturally, that I cannot help troubling you a little with a detail of them †. \* \* \* \* \* And now, my dear Wharton, why must I tell you a thing so contrary to my own wishes and yours? I believe it is impossible for me to see you in the North, or to enjoy any of those agreeable hours I had flattered myself with. This business will oblige me to be in town several times during the summer, particularly in August, when half the money is to be paid; besides the good people here would think me the most careless and ruinous of mortals, if I should take such a journey at this time. The only satisfaction I can pretend to, is that of hearing from you, and particularly at this time when I was bid to expect the good news of an encrease of your family. Your opinion of Diodorus is doubtless right; but there are things in him very curious, got out of better authorities now lost. Do you remember the Ægyptian history, and particularly the account of the gold mines? My own readings have been cruelly interrupted: What I have been highly pleased with,

† The paragraph here omitted contained an account of Mr. Gray's loss of a house by fire in Cornhill, and the expence he should be at in rebuilding it. Though it was insured, he could at this time ill bear to lay out the additional sum necessary for the purpose.



is the new Comedy from Paris by Greffet, called *le Mechant* ; if you have it not, buy his works altogether in two little volumes, they are collected by the Dutch booksellers, and consequently contain some trash ; but then there are the *Ver-vero*, the *Epistole* to P. Bougeant, the *Chartreuse*, that to his sister, an *Ode* on his country, and another on *Mediocrity*, and the *Sidnei*, another Comedy, all which have great beauties : There is also a Poem lately published by Thomson, called the *Castle of Indolence*, with some good stanzas in it. Mr. Mason is my acquaintance ; I liked that *Ode* \* much, but have found no one else that did. He has much fancy, little judgment, and a good deal of modesty ; I take him for a good and well-meaning creature ; but then he is really in simplicity a child, and loves every body he meets with : He reads little or nothing ; writes abundance, and that with a design to make his fortune by it. My best compliments to Mrs. Whar-

\* *Ode to a Water Nymph*, published about this time in *Doddley's Miscellany*. On reading what follows, many readers, I suspect, will think me as simple as ever, in forbearing to expunge the paragraph : But as I publish Mr. Gray's sentiments of authors, as well living as dead, without reserve, I should do them injustice, if I was more scrupulous with respect to myself. My friends, I am sure, will be much amused with this and another passage hereafter of a like sort. My enemies, if they please, may sneer at it ; and say (which they will very truly) that twenty-five years have made a very considerable abatement in my general philanthropy. Men of the world will not blame me for writing from so prudent a motive, as that of making my fortune by it ; and yet the truth, I believe, at the time was, that I was perfectly well satisfied, if my publications furnished me with a few guineas to see a Play or an Opera.

ton and your family : Does that name include any body I am not yet acquainted with ?

---

L E T T E R VIII.

Mr. GRAY to Dr. WHARTON.

*Stoke, August 19, 1748.*

I Am glad you have had any pleasure in Gresset ; he seems to me a truly elegant and charming writer ; the *Mechant* is the best Comedy I ever read ; his *Edward* I could scarce get through ; it is puerile ; though there are good lines, such as this for example :

“ Le jour d’un nouveau regne est le jour des ingrats.”

But good lines will make any thing rather than a play : However you are to consider this is a collection made up by the Dutch booksellers ; many things unfinished, or written in his youth, or designed not for the world, but to make his friends laugh, as the *Lutrin vivant*, &c. There are two noble lines ; which, as they are in the middle of an Ode to the King, may perhaps have escaped you.

“ Le cri d’un peuple heureux est la seule eloquence,  
“ Qui sçait parler des Rois.”

Which is very true, and should have been a hint to himself not to write Odes to the King at all.

As I have nothing more to say at present, I fill my paper with the beginning of an Essay ; what name to give it I know not ; but the subject is the Alliance of Education and Government : I mean to shew that they must both concur to produce great and

and useful men. I desire your judgment upon it before I proceed any further.

---

The first fifty-seven verses of an Ethical Essay accompanied this letter, which I shall here insert, with about fifty lines more, all of them finished in his highest manner. Had this noble design been compleated, I may, with great boldness, assert that it would have been one of the most capital Poems of the kind that ever appeared either in our own or any language. I am not informed how many Essays he meant to write upon the subject; nor do I believe that he had ever so far settled his plan as to determine that point: But since his theme was as extensive as human nature, (an observation he himself makes in a subsequent letter on the "*Esprit des Loix*") it is plain the whole work would have been considerable in point of size. He was busily employed in it at the time when M. de Montesquieu's book was first published: On reading it, he said the Baron had forestalled some of his best thoughts; and yet the reader will find, from the small fragment he has left, that the two writers differ a little in one very material point, viz. the influence of soil and climate on national manners\*. Some time after he had thoughts of resuming his plan, and of dedicating it, by an introductory Ode, to M. de Montesquieu; but that great man's death, which happened in 1755, made him drop his design finally.

\* See *L'Esprit des Loix*, Liv. 14. chap. 2, &c.

On carefully reviewing the scattered papers in prose, which he writ, as hints for his own use in the prosecution of this work, I think it best to form part of them into a kind of commentary at the bottom of the pages; they will serve greatly to elucidate (as far as they go) the method of his reasoning.

## E S S A Y I.

Πότα γ' ὃ γὰρ ἐ; τὰν γὰρ αἰσδάν  
οὔτι πω εἰς Αἰδάν γε τὸν ἐκλελαθόντα φυλαξέει.

THEOCRITUS.

**A**S sickly Plants betray a niggard earth,  
Whose barren bosom starves her gen'rous birth,  
Nor genial warmth, nor genial juice retains  
Their roots to feed, and fill their verdant veins :  
And as in climes, where Winter holds his reign 5  
The soil, tho' fertile, will not teem in vain,  
Forbids her gems to swell, her shades to rise,  
Nor trusts her blossoms to the churlish skies :

So

## C O M M E N T A R Y.

The Author's subject being (as we have seen) THE NECESSARY ALLIANCE BETWEEN A GOOD FORM OF GOVERNMENT AND A GOOD MODE OF EDUCATION, IN ORDER TO PRODUCE THE HAPPINESS OF MANKIND, the Poem opens with two similes; an uncommon kind of exordium: but which I suppose the Poet intentionally chose, to intimate

## N O T E S.

[As sickly Plants, &c. l. 1.] If any copies of this Essay would have authorized me to have made an alteration in the disposition of the lines, I would, for the sake of perspicuity, have



So draw Mankind in vain the vital airs,  
 Uniform'd, unfriended, by those kindly cares, 10  
 That health and vigour to the soul impart,  
 Spread the young thought, and warm the opening  
 heart :

So fond instruction on the growing powers  
 Of nature idly lavishes her stores,  
 If equal Justice with unclouded face 15  
 Smile not indulgent on the rising race,  
 And

## C O M M E N T A R Y.

intimate the analogical method he meant to pursue in his subsequent reasonings. 1st, He asserts that men without education are like sickly plants in a cold or barren soil, (line 1 to 5, and 8 to 12 ;) and, 2dly, he compares them, when unblest with

## N O T E S.

have printed the first twelve in the following manner; because I think the poetry would not have been in the least hurt by such a transposition, and the Poet's meaning would have been much more readily perceived. I put them down here for that purpose.

As sickly Plants betray a niggard earth,  
 Whose barren bosom starves her gen'rous birth,  
 Nor genial warmth, nor genial juice retains  
 Their roots to feed, and fill their verdant veins :  
 So draw Mankind in vain the vital airs,  
 Uniform'd, unfriended by those kindly cares,  
 That health and vigour to the soul impart,  
 Spread the young thought, and warm the opening heart.  
 And as in climes, where Winter holds his reign,  
 The soil, tho' fertile, will not teem in vain,  
 Forbids her gems to swell, her shades to rise,  
 Nor trust her blossoms to the churlish skies :  
 So fond Instruction, &c.

That

And scatter with a free, tho' frugal hand  
 Light golden showers of plenty o'er the land :  
 But Tyranny has fix'd her empire there  
 To check their tender hopes with chilling fear, } 20  
 And blast the blooming promise of the year.

This spacious animated scene survey,  
 From where the rolling Orb, that gives the day,  
 His fable sons with nearer course surrounds  
 To either pole, and life's remotest bounds 25  
 How rude soe'er th' exterior form we find,  
 Howe'er opinion tinge the varied mind,  
 Alike, to all the kind, impartial Heav'n  
 The sparks of truth and happiness has giv'n :  
 With sense to feel, with memory to retain, 30  
 They follow pleasure, and they fly from pain ;  
 Their judgment mends the plan their fancy draws,  
 Th' event presages, and explores the cause ;  
 The soft returns of gratitude they know,  
 By fraud elude, by force repel the foe ; 35  
 While mutual wishes, mutual woes endear  
 The social smile and sympathetic tear.

Say, then, thro' ages by what fate confin'd  
 To different climes seem different souls assign'd.  
 Here measur'd laws and philosophic ease 40  
 Fix, and improve the polish'd arts of peace.  
 There industry and gain their vigils keep,  
 Command the winds, and tame th' unwilling deep.  
 Here force and hardy deeds of blood prevail ;  
 There languid pleasure sighs in every gale. 45  
 Oft

## C O M M E N T A R Y.

with a just and well regulated government, to plants that will not blossom or bear fruit in an unkindly and inclement air (l. 5 to 9, and l. 13 to 22). Having thus laid down the two propositions he means to prove, he begins by examining  
 late

Oft o'er the trembling nations from afar  
 Has Scythia breath'd the living cloud of war ;  
 And, where the deluge burst, with sweepy sway  
 Their arms, their kings, their gods were roll'd away.  
 As oft have issued, host impelling host, 50  
 The blue-eyed myriads from the Baltic coast.

The

### C O M M E N T A R Y.

into the characteristics which (taking a general view of mankind) all men have in common one with another (l. 22 to 39);  
 they

### N O T E S.

[*Has Scythia breath'd, &c.* l. 47.] The most celebrated of the early irruptions of the Scythians into the neighbouring countries is that under the conduct of Madyes, about the year of the creation 3350, when they broke into Asia, during the reign of Cyaxares, king of the Medes, and conqueror of the Assyrians, plundered it at discretion, and kept possession of it during twenty-eight years. Many successive incursions, attended with every kind of desolation, are enumerated by historians; particularly those, in A. D. 252, during the reign of Gallus and Volusianus, and in 261, under that of Gallienus. Under the Greek emperors also to mention only the years 1053 and 1191, it appears that the Scythians still continued their accustomed ravages. In later times, the like spirit of sudden and destructive invasion has constantly prevailed; and these same Scythians, under their modern name of Tartars, have at different periods, over-run Asia, and even some parts of Europe: it is sufficient, on this point, to recall to the reader's memory the names of Gingis-Chan, Ootai, and Tamerlane.

[*The blue-eyed myriads, &c.* l. 51.] The different nations of Germans, who inhabited or bordered on this coast, have been always distinguished by their various emigrations in search of a better soil and climate, and of a more commodious settlement. The reader will readily recollect the expedition of the Teutones, who joined the Cimbri, when they  
 invaded

The prostrate South to the Destroyer yields  
 Her boasted titles, and her golden fields :  
 With grim delight the Brood of winter view  
 A brighter day, and Heav'ns of azure hue, 55  
 Scent the new fragrance of the breathing rose,  
 And quaff the pendent vintage as it grows.  
 Proud of the yoke, and pliant to the rod,  
 Why yet does Asia dread a monarch's nod,  
 While European freedom still withstands 60  
 Th' encroaching tide, that drowns her lessening lands ;  
 And

## C O M M E N T A R Y

they covet pleasure and avoid pain (l. 31) ; they feel gratitude for benefits (l. 34) ; they desire to avenge wrongs, which they effect either by force or cunning (l. 35) ; they are

## N O T E S.

invaded the Roman territories to the united amount, it is said, of 300,000 fighting men ; the many inroads of the Germans into Gaul, under the conduct of Ariovistus ; and the numerous irruptions, into the Roman empire, of the Suevi, the Goths, the Vandals, and lastly of the Lombards ; most of which nations came originally from the coasts here mentioned. The epithet "blue-eyed" exhibits a distinguishing feature of the antient Germans ; and is particularly remarked by Tacitus and Juvenal. "Truces et cærulei oculi," observes the former, "de Popul: German: 4." and the latter, "Cærulea quis stupuit Germani lumina?" "Sat 13. ver. 164."

[*With grim delight, &c.* l. 54.] It may not be improper here, after admiring the noble vein of poetical expression and imagery which adorns this description, to relate an incident in itself curious, which shews the propriety of it. The Normans, who came originally from Norway and Scandinavia, having, after a century of ravages, settled themselves in Neustria (since called Normandy) in 1012, were invited into the southern



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## N O T E S.

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And sees far off with an indignant groan  
 Her native plains, and Empires once her own.  
 Can opener skies and suns of fiercer flame  
 O'erpower the fire, that animates our frame ; 65  
 As lamps, that shed at eve a chearful ray,  
 Fade and expire beneath the eye of day ?  
 Need we the influence of the Northern star  
 To string our nerves and steel our hearts to war ?  
 And, where the face of nature laughs around, 70  
 Must sick'ning virtue fly the tainted ground ?  
 Unmanly thought ! what seasons can controul,  
 What fancied zone can circumscribe the soul,  
 Who, conscious of the source from whence she springs,  
 By reason's light, on resolution's wings, 75  
 Spite

## C O M M E N T A R Y.

are linked to each other by their common feelings, and participate in sorrow and in joy (l. 36, 37). If then all the human species agree in so many moral particulars, whence arises the diversity of national characters ? This question the Poet puts at line 38, and dilates upon to l. 64. Why, says he, have some nations shewn a propensity to commerce and industry ; others to war and rapine ; others to ease and pleasure ? (l. 42 to 46) Why have the Northern people overspread, in all ages, and prevailed over the Southern ? (l. 46 to

## N O T E S.

southern parts of Italy, in the year 1018, by Gaimar prince of Salerno. The Ambassadors, by his particular direction, carried with them a quantity of Citrons, and of other rare fruits, as the most alluring proof of the mildness of the climate. He thought (and the event showed he was right in thinking so) that this "Brood of winter," delighted with the taste and fragrance of these delicacies, would the more readily consent to his proposal. [See Leo Ostiensis in his "Chron: Cassin:"

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Spite of her frail companion, dauntless goes  
 O'er Lybia's deserts and thro' Zembla's snows ?  
 She bids each slumb'ring energy awake,  
 Another touch, another temper take,  
 Suspends th' inferior laws, that rule our clay : 80  
 The stubborn elements confess her sway ;  
 Their little wants, their low desires, refine,  
 And raise the mortal to a height divine.

Not but the human fabric from the birth  
 Imbibes a flavour of its parent earth. 85  
 As various tracts enforce a various toil,  
 The manners speak the idiom of their soil.  
 An iron-race the mountain-cliffs maintain,  
 Foes to the gentler genius of the plain :  
 For where unwearied sinews must be found 90  
 With side-long plough to quell the stinty ground,  
 To turn the torrent's swift-descending flood,  
 To brave the savage rushing from the wood,  
 What wonder, if to patient valour train'd  
 They guard with spirit, what by strength they  
 gain'd ? 95

## C O M M E N T A R Y.

to 58) Why has Asia been, time out of mind, the seat of despotism, and Europe that of freedom ? (l. 59 to 64.) Are we from these instances to imagine men necessarily enslaved to the inconveniences of the climate where they were born ? (l. 64 to 72) Or are we not rather to suppose there is a natural

## N O T E S.

and Petavius, "Rationarium Temp: pars: prim: lib: viii."]  
 Mr. Gray's judgment, in what remains to us of this essay, is very remarkable. He borrows from poetry his imagery, his similes, and his expressions; but his thoughts are taken, as the nature of the Poem requires, from history and observation.



And while their rocky ramparts round they see,  
 The rough abode of want and liberty,  
 (As lawless force from confidence will grow)  
 Insult the plenty of the vales below ?  
 What wonder in the sultry climes, that spread, 100  
 Where Nile redundant o'er his summer-bed  
 From his broad bosom life and verdure flings,  
 And broods o'er Ægypt with his wat'ry wings,  
 If with advent'rous oar and ready sail 105  
 The dusky people drive before the gale ;

Or

## C O M M E N T A R Y.

ral strength in the human mind, that is able to vanquish and break through them ? (l. 72 to 84) It is confessed, however, that men receive an early tincture from the situation they are placed in, and the climate which produces them (l. 84 to 88). Thus the inhabitants of the mountains, inured to labour and patience, are naturally trained to war (l. 88 to 96) ; while those of the plain are more open to any attack, and softened by ease and plenty (l. 96 to 99). Again, the Ægyptians, from the nature of their situation, might be the inventors of home-navigation, from a necessity of keeping up an intercourse between their towns during the inundation of the Nile (l. 99 to \* \* \* \*). Those persons would naturally have the first turn to commerce, who inhabited a barren coast like the Tyrians, and were persecuted by some neighbouring tyrant ; or were drove to take refuge on some shoals, like the Venetian and Hollander ; their discovery of some rich island, in the infancy of the world,

## N O T E S.

[*And broods o'er Ægypt, &c.* l. 103.] The image seems to be taken from the figure of Jupiter Pluvius, as represented on the Antonine Pillar : But the whole passage rises to a height beyond the powers either of sculpture or painting to ascend. The critic would, with difficulty, find any description in antiquity, which exceeds this in point of true sublimity.

[That

Or on frail floats to neighb'ring cities ride,  
That rise and glitter o'er the ambient tide.

\* \* \* \* \*

LET-

# COMMENTARY.

world, described. The Tartar hardened to war by his rigorous climate and pastoral life, and by his disputes for water and herbage in a country without land-marks, as also by skirmishes between his rival clans, was consequently fitted to conquer his rich Southern neighbours, whom ease and luxury had enervated: Yet this is no proof that liberty and valour may not exist in Southern climes, since the Syrians and Carthaginians gave noble instances of both; and the Arabians carried their conquests as far as the Tartars. Rome also (for many centuries) repulsed those very nations, which, when she grew weak, at length demolished \* her extensive Empire. \* \* \* \*

## NOTES.

[*That rise and glitter o'er the ambient tide*, l. 107.] The foregoing account of the river Nile, while it is embellished with all the graces of description, is given at the same time in exact conformity to truth and reality; as the reader will observe from the following citation.—“Le Nil portoit par tout la fécondité avec ses eaux salutaires, unissoit les villes entre elles, et la grande mer avec la mer rouge, entretenoit le commerce au dedans et au dehors du Royaume, et le fortifioit contre l'ennemi: de sorte qu'il étoit tout ensemble et le nourricier, et le défenseur de l'Egypte. On lui abandonnoit la campagne: mais les villes, rehaussées avec des travaux immenses, et s'élevant comme des Isles au milieu des eaux, regardoient avec joye de cette hauteur toute la plaine inondée et tout ensemble fertilisée par le Nil.” *Bossuet*, *Disc: sur l'Hist: trois: part:*

\* The Reader will perceive that the Commentary goes further than the Text. The reason for which is, that the Editor found it so on the paper from which he formed that comment; and as the thoughts seemed to be those which Mr. Gray would

## LETTER IX.

Mr. GRAY to Dr. WHARTON.

*Cambridge, March 9, 1748.*

**Y**OU ask for some account of books. The principal I can tell you of is a work of the President Montesquieu, the labour of twenty years; it is called *L'Esprit des Loix*, 2 vols. 4to, printed at Geneva. He lays down the principles on which are founded the three sorts of government, Despotism,

would have next graced with the harmony of his numbers, he held it best to give them in continuation. There are other maxims on different papers, all apparently relating to the same subject, which are too excellent to be lost; these therefore (as the place in which he meant to employ them cannot be ascertained) I shall subjoin to this note under the title of detached Sentiments.

“Man is a creature not capable of cultivating his mind but in society, and in that only where he is not a slave to the necessities of life.

Want is the mother of the inferior arts, but ease that of the finer; as eloquence, policy, morality, poetry, sculpture, painting, architecture, which are the improvements of the former.

The climate inclines some nations to contemplation and pleasure; others to hardship, action, and war; but not so as to incapacitate the former for courage and discipline, or the latter for civility, politeness, and works of genius.

It is the proper work of education and government united to redress the faults that arise from the soil and air.

The principal drift of education should be to make men *think* in the Northern climates, and *act* in the Southern.

The different steps and degrees of education may be compared to the artificer's operations upon marble; it is one thing to dig it out of the quarry, and another to square it;

tism, the limited Monarchy, and the Republican ; and shews how from these are deduced the laws and customs by which they are guided and maintained ; the education proper to each form ; the influence of climate, situation, religion, &c. on the minds of particular nations and on their policy. The subject, you see, is as extensive as mankind ; the thoughts perfectly new, generally admirable as they are just, sometimes a little too refined. In short, there are

to give it gloss and lustre, call forth every beautiful spot and vein, shape it into a column, or animate it into a statue.

To a native of free and happy governments his country is always dear :

“ He loves his old hereditary trees.” COWLEY.

While the subject of a tyrant has no country ; he is therefore selfish and base-minded ; he has no family, no posterity, no desire of fame ; or, if he has, of one that turns not on its proper object.

Any nation that wants public spirit, neglects education, ridicules the desire of fame, and even of virtue and reason, must be ill governed.

Commerce changes intirely the fate and genius of nations, by communicating arts and opinions, circulating money, and introducing the materials of luxury ; she first opens and polishes the mind, then corrupts and enervates both that and the body.

Those invasions of effeminate Southern nations by the war-like Northern people, seem (in spite of all the terror, mischief, and ignorance which they brought with them) to be necessary evils ; in order to revive the spirit of mankind, softened and broken by the arts of commerce, to restore them to their native liberty and equality, and to give them again the power of supporting danger and hardship ; so a comet with all the horrors that attend it as it passes through our system brings a supply of warmth and light to the sun, and of moisture to the air.

The doctrine of Epicurus is ever ruinous to society : It had its rise when Greece was declining, and perhaps hastened its dissolution,



are faults, but such as an ordinary man could never have committed. The style very lively and concise (consequently sometimes obscure) ; it is the gravity of Tacitus, whom he admires, tempered with the gaiety and fire of a Frenchman. The time of night will not suffer me to go on ; but I will write again in a week.

dissolution, as also that of Rome ; it is now propagated in France and in England, and seems likely to produce the same effect in both.

One principal characteristic of vice in the present age is the contempt of fame.

Many are the uses of good fame to a generous mind : it extends our existence and example into future ages ; continues and propagates virtue, which otherwise would be as short-lived as our frame ; and prevents the prevalence of vice in a generation more corrupt even than our own. It is impossible to conquer that natural desire we have of being remembered ; even criminal ambition and avarice, the most selfish of all passions, would wish to leave a name behind them."

I find also among these papers a single couplet much too beautiful to be lost, though the place where he meant to introduce it cannot be ascertained ; it must however, have made a part of some description of the effect which the reformation had on our national manners :

When Love could teach a monarch to be wise,  
And Gospel-light first dawn'd from BULLEN's Eyes.

Thus, with all the attention that a connoisseur in painting employs in collecting every slight outline as well as finished drawing which led to the completion of some capital picture, I have endeavoured to preserve every fragment of this great poetical design. It surely deserved this care, as it was one of the noblest which Mr. Gray ever attempted ; and also, as far as he carried it into execution, the most exquisitely finished. That he carried it no further is, and must ever be, a most sensible loss to the republic of letters.

L E T.

## LETTER X.

Mr. GRAY to Dr. WHARTON.

*Cambridge, April 25, 1749.*

**I** Perceive that second parts are as bad to write as they can be to read ; for this, which you ought to have had a week after the first, has been a full month in coming forth. The spirit of laziness (the spirit of the place) begins to possess even me, who have so long declaimed against it ; yet has it not so prevailed, but that I feel that discontent with myself, that ennui, that ever accompanies it in its beginnings. Time will settle my conscience ; time will reconcile me to this languid companion : We shall smoke, we shall tipple, we shall doze together : We shall have our little jokes like other people, and our old stories : Brandy will finish what Port began ; and a month after the time you will see in some corner of a London Evening Post, “ Yesterday died “ the Reverend Mr. John Gray, Senior Fellow of “ Clare-Hall, a facetious companion, and well- “ respected by all that knew him. His death is “ supposed to have been occasioned by a fit of an “ apoplexy, being found fallen out of bed with his “ head in the chamber-pot.”

In the meanwhile, to go on with my account of new Books. Montesquieu's work, which I mentioned before, is now publishing anew in 2 vols. octavo. Have you seen old Crebillon's Catilina, a Tragedy, which has had a prodigious run at Paris ? Historical truth is too much perverted in it, which

is ridiculous in a story so generally known ; but if you can get over this, the sentiments and versification are fine, and most of the characters (particularly the principal one) painted with great spirit.

Mr. Birch, the indefatigable, has just put out a thick octavo of original papers of Queen Elizabeth's time ; there are many curious things in it, particularly letters from Sir Robert Cecil (Salisbury) about his negotiations with Henry IV. of France, the Earl of Monmouth's odd account of Queen Elizabeth's death, several peculiarities of James I. and Prince Henry, &c. and above all an excellent account of the state of France, with characters of the king, his court, and ministry, by Sir George Carew, ambassador there. This, I think, is all new worth mentioning, that I have seen or heard of ; except a Natural History of Peru, in Spanish, printed at London, by Don — something, a man of learning, sent thither by that court on purpose.

You ask after my chronology. It was begun, as I told you, almost two years ago, when I was in the midst of Diogenes Laertius and his Philosophers, as a præmium to their works. My intention in forming this table was not so much for public events, though these too have a column assigned them, but rather in a literary way to compare the time of all great men, their writings, and their transactions. I have brought it from the 30th Olympiad, where it begins, to the 113th ; that is, 332 years\*. My only modern assistants were Marsham, Dodwell, and Bentley.

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\* This laborious work was formed much in the manner of the President Henault's "Histoire de France." Every page consisted

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## L E T T E R   X I.

Mr. GRAY to Dr. WHARTON.

*Cambridge, August 8, 1749.*

**I** Promised Dr. Keene long since to give you an account of our magnificences here \* ; but the news papers and he himself in person have got the start of my indolence, so that by this time you are well acquainted with all the events that adorned that week of wonders. Thus much I may venture to tell you, because it is probable nobody else has done it, that our friend \* \* \* \* 's zeal and eloquence surpassed all power of description. Vesuvio in an eruption was not more violent than his utterance, (nor since I am at my mountains) Pelion, with all its pine-trees in a storm of wind, more impetuous than his action ; and yet the Senate-House still stands, and (I thank God) we are all safe and well at your service. I was ready to sink for him, and

consisted of nine columns ; one for the Olympiad, the next for the Archons, the third for the public affairs of Greece, the three next for the Philosophers, and the three last for Poets, Historians, and Orators. I do not find it carried further than the date above-mentioned.

\* The Duke of Newcastle's Installation as Chancellor of the University.



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consisted of nine columns ; one for the Olympiad, the next for the Archons, the third for the public affairs of Greece, the three next for the Philosophers, and the three last for Poets, Historians, and Orators. I do not find it carried further than the date above-mentioned.

\* The Duke of Newcastle's Installation as Chancellor of the University.

scarce dared to look about me, when I was sure it was all over ; but soon found I might have spared my confusion ; all people joined to applaud him. Every thing was quite right ; and I dare swear, not three people here but think him a model of oratory ; for all the Duke's little court came with a resolution to be pleased ; and when the tone was once given, the university, who ever wait for the judgment of their betters, struck into it with an admirable harmony : for the rest of the performances, they were just what they usually are. Every one, while it lasted, was very gay and very busy in the morning, and very owlish and very tipsy at night : I make no exceptions from the Chancellor to Blue-coat. Ma-son's Ode was the only entertainment that had any tolerable elegance ; and, for my own part, I think it (with some little abatements) uncommonly well on such an occasion. Pray let me know your sentiments ; for doubtless you have seen it. The author of it grows apace into my good graces, as I know him more ; he is very ingenious with great good nature and simplicity ; a little vain, but in so harmless and so comical a way, that it does not offend one at all ; a little ambitious, but withal so ignorant in the world and its ways, that this does not hurt him in one's opinion ; so sincere and so undisguised, that no mind with a spark of generosity, would ever think of hurting him, he lies so open to injury ; but so indolent, that if he cannot overcome this habit, all his good qualities will signify nothing at all. After all, I like him so well, I could wish you knew him.

L E T.

## L E T T E R    X I I .

Mr. GRAY to his MOTHER.

*Cambridge, Nov. 7, 1749.*

**T**HE unhappy news I have just received from you equally surprises and afflicts me \*. I have lost a person I lov'd very much, and have been used to from my infancy ; but am much more concerned for your loss, the circumstances of which I forbear to dwell upon, as you must be too sensible of them yourself ; and will, I fear, more and more need a consolation that no one can give, except He who has preserved her to you, so many years, and at last, when it was his pleasure, has taken her from us to himself : and perhaps, if we reflect upon what she felt in this life, we may look upon this as an instance of his goodness both to her, and to those that loved her. She might have languished many years before our eyes in a continual increase of pain, and totally helpless ; she might have long wished to end her misery without being able to attain it ; or perhaps even lost all sense, and yet continued to breathe ; a sad spectacle to such as must have felt more for her than she could have done for herself. However you may deplore your own loss, yet think that she is

\* The death of his aunt, Mrs. Mary Antrobus, who died the 5th of November, and was buried in a vault in Stoke church-yard near the chancel door, in which also his mother and himself (according to the direction in his will) were afterwards buried.



easy and happy; and has now more occasion to pity us than we her. I hope, and beg, you will support yourself with that resignation we owe to him, who gave us our being for our good, and who deprives us of it for the same reason. I would have come to you directly, but you do not say whether you desire I should or not; if you do, I beg I may know it, for there is nothing to hinder me, and I am in very good health.

# LETTER XIII.

Mr. GRAY to Dr. WHARTON.

*Stoke, August 9, 1750.*

**A**RISTOTLE says (one may write Greek to you without scandal) that *Οἱ τοιοῦτοι διαλυοῦσι τὴν φιλίαν ἀπλῶς, ἀλλὰ τὴν ἐνέρσειαν· καὶ δὲ χρόνιος ἡ ἀπουσία γόνεται καὶ τῆς φιλίας δακνὴ λήθην ποιεῖν.* "Οθεν εἰρηται

*Πολλὰς δὲ φιλίας ἀπροσηγορὰ δύνανται.*

But Aristotle may say whatever he pleases, I do not find myself at all the worse for it. I could indeed wish to refresh my *Ἐνέρσειαν* a little at Durham by the sight of you, but when is there a probability of my being so happy? It concerned me greatly when I heard the other day that your asthma continued at times to afflict you, and that you were often obliged to go into the country to breathe; you cannot oblige me more than by giving me an account both of the state of your body and mind: I hope the latter is able to keep you chearful and easy in spite of the frailties

frailties of its companion. As to my own, it can neither do one nor the other ; and I have the mortification to find my spiritual part the most infirm thing about me. You have doubtless heard of the loss I have had in Dr. Middleton, whose house was the only easy place one could find to converse in at Cambridge : For my part I find a friend so uncommon a thing, that I cannot help regretting even an old acquaintance, which is an indifferent likeness of it ; and though I do not approve the spirit of his books, methinks 'tis pity the world should lose so rare a thing as a good writer \*.

My studies cannot furnish a recommendation of many new books to you. There is a defence "*de l'Esprit des Loix*," by Montesquieu himself ; it has some lively things in it, but is very short, and his adversary appears to be so mean a bigot that he deserved no answer. There are 3 vols. in 4to of "*Histoire du Cabinet du Roy*, by Messrs. Buffons and d'Aubenton ;" the first is a man of character, but I am told has hurt it by this work. It is all a sort of introduction to natural history ; the weak part of it is a love of system which runs through it ; the most contrary thing in the world to a science entirely grounded upon experiments, and which has nothing to do with † vivacity of imagination. However I cannot help commending the general view which he gives of the face of the earth, followed by a particular one of all the known nations, their peculiar figure and manners, which is the best epi-

\* Mr. Gray used to say, that good writing not only required great parts, but the very best of those parts.

† One cannot therefore help lamenting, that Mr. Gray let his imagination lie dormant so frequently, in order to apply himself to this very science.

tome of geography I ever met with, and written with sense and elegance; in short, these books are well worth turning over. The Memoirs of the Abbé de Mongon, in five vols. are highly commended, but I have not seen them. He was engaged in several embassies to Germany, England, &c. during the course of the late war. The President Henault's "Abregè Chronologique de l'Histoire de France," I believe I have before mentioned to you as a very good book of its kind.

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About this time Mr. Gray had put his last hand to his celebrated Elegy in a Country Church-yard, and had communicated it to his friend Mr. Walpole, whose good taste was too much charmed with it to suffer him to withhold the sight of it from his acquaintance; accordingly it was shewn about for some time in manuscript, (as Mr. Gray intimates in the subsequent letter to Dr. Wharton) and received with all the applause it so justly merited. Amongst the rest of the fashionable world, for to these only it was at present communicated, Lady Cobham, who now lived at the mansion-house at Stoke-Pogis, had read and admired it. She wished to be acquainted with the author; accordingly her relation Miss Speed and lady Schaub, then at her house, undertook to bring this about by making him the first visit. He happened to be from home, when the Ladies arrived at his Aunt's solitary mansion; and, when he returned, was surprized to find, on one of his papers in the parlour where he usually read, the following note: "Lady Schaub's compliments to

"Mr.

“ Mr. Gray ; she is sorry not to have found him at home, to tell him that Lady Brown is very well.” This necessarily obliged him to return the visit, and soon after induced him to compose a ludicrous account of this little adventure for the amusement of the Ladies in question. He wrote it in ballad measure, and entitled it a Long Story : when it was handed about in manuscript, nothing could be more various than the opinions concerning it ; by some it was thought a master-piece of original humour, by others a wild and fantastic farrago ; and when it was published, the sentiments of good judges were equally divided about it. How it came to be printed I shall mention hereafter ; and also inform the reader why Mr. Gray rejected it in the collection which he himself made of his Poems : In the meanwhile, as I think it ought to have a place in these Memoirs for reasons too obvious to insist upon, I shall beg leave to preface it with my own idea of the author’s peculiar vein of humour ; which, with my notes on the piece itself, may perhaps account in some sort for the variety of opinions which people of acknowledged taste have formed concerning it.

Mr. Gray had not (in my opinion) either in his conversation or writing much of what is called *pure* humour ; it was always so much blended either with wit, fancy, or his own peculiar character, that it became equivocal, and hence not adapted to please generally : It had more of the manner of Congreve than Addison ; and we know where one person relishes my Lady Wishfort, there are thousands that admire Sir Roger de Coverley : It will not however from hence follow, that Lady Wishfort is ill drawn ; for my own part I think it one of the most entertaining



taining characters that ever was written. I know, however, that it is commonly thought extravagant and unnatural; and I believe it is true, that no woman ever existed that had so much folly and affectation, and at the same time so much wit and fancy; yet every one sees that were this fancy and wit taken away, her character would become insipid, in proportion as it became more natural; so that, in this and other instances, *if Congreve's fools were fools indeed*, they would, by being *true* characters, cease to be *entertaining* ones. It may be further observed on the subject of humour, that it may and ought to be divided into several species: there is one sort, that of Terence's, which simply pleases without forcing a smile; another, like Mr. Addison's, which not only pleases, but makes us smile into the bargain. Shakespeare's, Swift's, Congreve's, and Prior's usually go further, and make us laugh: I infer not from hence that this latter sort is the best: I only assert, that however it may be mixt with other ingredients, it ought also to be called Humour. The critic, however, who judges by rule, and who will not be pleased unless legitimately, will be apt to condemn this species of mixt humour; and the common reader will not always have either wit or imagination enough to comprehend or taste it. But I have said Mr. Gray not only mixed wit and fancy with his humour, but also his own particular character; and being naturally delicate, and at times even fastidious, his humour generally took the same cast; and would therefore be only relished by such of his friends, who, conscious of his superior excellencies, thought this defect not only pardonable but entertaining, which a character of this sort (being humorous in itself) always is, when it is not carried

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carried to any offensive extreme. Yet as this observation relates only to his conversation and familiar letters, (for to these only it can be applied) I have no occasion to insist on it further; and shall only add, that whatever the generality of readers may think of Mr. Gray's talent in this way, there will always be some, and those far from the lowest class, to whom it will appear excellent: for humour may be true, when it ceases to be pure or unmixed, if the ingredients which go to its composition be true also. False wit and a wild fancy would debase the best humour in the world, as they frequently do in Rabelais and Sterne (without taking more exceptionable matters into consideration); but when genuine, they serve to heighten and embellish it.

## A L O N G S T O R Y.

**I**N Britain's isle, no matter where,  
**I** (a) An antient pile of building stands:  
 The Huntingdons and Hattons there  
 Employ'd the pow'r of Fairy hands.

To raise the cieling's fretted height,  
 Each pannel in achievements cloathing,  
 Rich windows that exclude the light,  
 And passages, that lead to nothing.

(a) The mansion-house at Stoke-Pogis, then in possession of Viscountess Cobham. The style of building, which we now call Queen Elizabeth's, is here admirably described, both with regard to its beauties and defects; and the third and fourth stanzas delineate the fantastic manners of her time with equal truth and humour. The house formerly belonged to the Earls of Huntingdon and the family of Hatton.

Full

Full oft within the spacious walls,  
When he had fifty Winters o'er him,

(b) My grave Lord Keeper led the brawls;  
The seal and maces danc'd before him.

His bushy beard, and shoe-strings green,  
His high-crown'd hat, and sattin doublet,  
Mov'd the stout heart of England's Queen,  
Though Pope and Spaniard could not trouble it.

What, in the very first beginning!  
Shame of the versifying tribe!  
Your hist'ry whither are you spinning!  
Can you do nothing but describe?

A house there is (and that's enough)  
From whence one fatal morning issues  
(c) A brace of warriors, not in buff,  
But rustling in their silks and tissues.

The first came cap-a-pee from France,  
Her conqu'ring destiny fulfilling,  
Whom meaner beauties eye askance,  
And vainly ape her art of killing.

The other Amazon kind heav'n  
Had arm'd with spirit, wit, and satire:  
But Cobham had the polish giv'n,  
And tip'd her arrows with good nature.

To celebrate her eyes, her air.—  
Coarse panegyrics would but tease her.

(b) Sir Christopher Hatton, promoted by Queen Elizabeth for his graceful person and fine dancing. G.—Brawls were a sort of figure-dance, then in vogue, and probably deemed as elegant as our modern Cotillions, or still more modern Quadrilles.

(c) The reader is already apprized who these Ladies were; the two descriptions are prettily contrasted; and nothing can be more happily turned than the compliment to Lady Cobham in the eighth stanza.

Melissa

Melissa is her *Nom de Guerre*.

Alas, who would not wish to please her !

With bonnet blue and capuchine,  
And aprons long they hid their armour,  
And veil'd their weapons bright and keen  
In pity to the country farmer.

Fame in the shape of (d) Mr. P—t  
(By this time all the parish know it)  
Had told, that thereabouts there lurk'd  
A wicked Imp they call a Poet :

Who prowld the country far and near,  
Bewitch'd the children of the peasants,  
Dried up the cows, and lam'd the deer,  
And suck'd the eggs, and kill'd the pheasants.

My Lady heard their joint petition,  
Swore by her coronet and ermine,  
She'd issue out her high commission  
To rid the manor of such vermin.

The Heroines undertook the task,  
Thro' lanes unknown, o'er stiles they ventur'd,  
Rap'd at the door, nor stay'd to ask,  
But bounce into the parlour enter'd.

The trembling family they daunt,  
They flirt, they sing, they laugh, they tattle,  
Rummage his Mother, pinch his Aunt,  
And up stairs in a whirl-wind rattle.

Each hole and cupboard they explore,  
Each creek and cranny of his chamber,  
Run hurry-skurry round the floor,  
And o'er the bed and tester clamber ;

(d) I have been told that this Gentleman, a neighbour and acquaintance of Mr. Gray's in the country, was much displeased at the liberty here taken with his name ; yet, surely, without any great reason.

Into



Into the drawers and china pry,  
 Papers and books, a huge imbroglio !  
 Under a tea-cup he might lie,  
 Or creased, like dogs-ears, in a folio.

On the first marching of the troops,  
 The Muses, hopeless of his pardon,  
 Convey'd him underneath their hoops  
 To a small closet in the garden.

So Rumor says : (Who will, believe.)  
 But that they left the door a-jar,  
 Where, safe and laughing in his sleeve,  
 He heard the distant din of war.

Short was his joy. He little knew  
 The pow'r of Magic was no fable ;  
 Out of the window, whisk, they flew,  
 (e) But left a spell upon the table.

The

(e) Fancy is here so much blended with the humour, that I believe the two stanzas, which succeed this line, are amongst those which are the least relished by the generality. The description of the spell, I know, has appeared to many persons absolutely unintelligible : yet if the reader adverts to that peculiar idea which runs through the whole, I imagine the obscurity complained of will be removed. An incident, we see, so slight as the simple matter of fact, required something like machinery to enliven it : Accordingly the author chose, with propriety enough, to employ for that purpose those notions of witchcraft, ghosts, and enchantment, which prevailed at the time when the mansion-house was built. He describes himself as a demon of the lowest class, a wicked imp who lam'd the deer, &c. against whose malevolent power Lady Cobham (the Gloriana of the piece) employs two superior enchantresses. Congruity of imagery therefore, required the card they left upon the table to be converted into a spell. Now all the old writers, on these subjects, are very minute in describing the materials of such talismans. Hence, therefore, his grotesque idea of a composition of transparent bird-

lime

The words too eager to unriddle,  
The Poet felt a strange disorder :  
Transparent bird-lime form'd the middle,  
And chains invisible the border.

So cunning was the Apparatus,  
The powerful pot-hooks did so move him,  
That, will he, nill he, to the Great-house  
He went, as if the Devil drove him.

(f) Yet on his way (no sign of grace,  
For folks in fear are apt to pray)  
To Phœbus he prefer'd his case,  
And beg'd his aid that dreadful day.

The Godhead wou'd have back'd his quarrel ;  
But with a blush on recollection,  
Own'd, that his quiver and his laurel  
'Gainst four such eyes were no protection.

lime, edged with invisible chains in order to catch and draw him to the tribunal. Without going further for examples of this kind of imagery than the Poet's own works, let me instance two passages of the serious kind, similar to this ludicrous one. In his Ode, entitled the Bard,

“ Above, below, the rose of snow, &c.”

And, again, in the Fatal Sisters,

“ See the grisly texture grow.”

It must, however, be allowed, that no person can fully relish this burlesque, who is not much conversant with the old romance-writers, and with the Poets who formed themselves on their model.

(f) The humour of this and the following stanza is more pure, and consequently more obvious. It might have been written by Prior, and the wit at the end is much in his best manner.

The

The Court was sate, the Culprit there,  
Forth from their gloomy mansions creeping  
(g) The Lady Janes and Joans repair,  
And from the gallery stand peeping :

Such as in silence of the night  
Come (sweep) along some winding entry.  
(b) (Styack has often seen the sight)  
Or at the chapel-door stand centry :

(i) In peaked hoods and mantles tarnish'd,  
Sour visages, enough to scare ye,  
High dames of honour once, that garnish'd  
The drawing room of fierce Queen Mary !

The Peerefs comes. The audience stare,  
And doff their hats with due submission :  
She curtsies, as she takes her chair,  
To all the people of condition.

The Bard with many an artful fib,  
Had in imagination fenc'd him,  
Disprov'd the arguments of (k) Squib,  
And all that (l) Groom could urge against him.

(g) Here Fancy is again uppermost, and soars as high on her comic, as on another occasion she does on her lyric wing : For now a Chorus of ghostly old women of quality, come to give sentence on the culprit Poet, just as the spirits of Cadwallo, Urien, and Hoel join the Bard in dreadful symphony to denounce vengeance on Edward I. The route of Fancy, we see, is the same both on the humorous and sublime occasion. No wonder, therefore, if either of them should fail of being generally tasted.

(b) The House-Keeper. G.

(i) The description is here excellent, and I should think would please universally.

(k) Groom of the Chamber. G.

(l) The Steward. G.

But

But soon his rhetorick forsook him,  
 When he the solemn hall had seen ;  
 A sudden fit of ague shook him,  
 He stood as mute as poor (*m*) Macleane.

Yet something he was heard to-mutter,  
 " How in the Park beneath an old tree  
 " (Without design to hurt the butter,  
 " Or any malice to the poultry,)   
 " He once or twice had pen'd a sonnet ;  
 " Yet hop'd, that he might save his bacon :  
 " Numbers would give their oaths upon it,  
 " He ne'er was for a conj'rer taken."

The ghostly prudes with (*n*) hagg'd face  
 Already had condemn'd the sinner.

My Lady rose, and with a grace——

(*o*) She smil'd, and bid him come to dinner.

(*m*) A famous Highwayman hang'd the week before. G.  
 —This stanza is of the sort where wit rather than fancy  
 prevails, consequently much in Prior's manner.

(*n*) Hagg'd, (*i. e.*) the face of a witch or Hag ; the epi-  
 thet Hagard has been sometimes mistaken, as conveying the  
 same idea ; but it means a very different thing, viz. wild  
 and farouche, and is taken from an unreclaimed Hawk, called  
 an Hagard ; in which its proper sense the Poet uses it finely  
 on a sublime occasion :

Cloath'd in the sable garb of woe,  
 With hagard eyes the Poet stood.

Vid. Ode 6th.

(*o*) Here the story finishes ; the exclamation of the Ghosts  
 which follows is characteristic of the Spanish manners of the  
 age, when they are supposed to have lived ; and the 500  
 stanzas, said to be lost, may be imagined to contain the re-  
 mainder of their long-winded expostulation.

" Jesu-



" Jesu-Maria ! Madam Bridget,  
 " Why, what can the Viscountess mean ?  
 (Cried the square-hoods in woeful fidget)  
 " The times are altered quite and clean !  
 " Decorum's turn'd to mere civility ;  
 " Her air and all her manners shew it.  
 " Commend me to her affability !  
 " Speak to a Commoner and Poet !"

[Here 500 Stanzas are lost.]

And so God save our noble King,  
 And guard us from long-winded Lubbers,  
 That to eternity would sing,  
 And keep my lady from her Rubbers.

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## L E T T E R   X I V .

Mr. GRAY to Dr. WHARTON.

Dec. 17, 1750.

**O**F my house I cannot say much \*, I wish I  
 could ; but for my heart it is no less yours  
 than it has long been ; and the last thing in the  
 world that will throw it into tumults is a fine Lady.  
 The verses, you so kindly try to keep in counte-  
 nance, were written merely to divert Lady Cobham  
 and her family, and succeeded accordingly ; but  
 being shewed about in town are not liked there at  
 all. Mrs. \* \* \*, a very fashionable personage, told  
 Mr. Walpole that she had seen a thing by a friend

\* The house he was rebuilding in Cornhill. See Letter VII. of this Section.

of his which she did not know what to make of, for it aimed at every thing, and meant nothing; to which he replied, that he had always taken her for a woman of sense, and was very sorry to be undeceived. On the other hand, the stanzas \* which I now enclose to you have had the misfortune, by Mr. Walpole's fault, to be made still more public, for which they certainly were never meant; but it is too late to complain. They have been so applauded, it is quite a shame to repeat it: I mean not to be modest; but it is a shame for those who have said such superlative things about them, that I cannot repeat them. I should have been glad that you and two or three more people had liked them, which would have satisfied my ambition on this head amply. I have been this month in town, not at Newcastle-House; but diverting myself among my gay acquaintance, and return to my cell with so much the more pleasure. I dare not speak of my future excursion to Durham for fear of a disappointment, but at present it is my full intention.

## L E T T E R XV.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WALPOLE.

*Cambridge, Feb. 11, 1751.*

AS you have brought me into a little sort of distress, you must assist me, I believe, to get out of it as well as I can. Yesterday I had the misfortune of receiving a letter from certain gentlemen

\* Elegy in a Country Church Yard.

(as their bookseller expresses it), who have taken the Magazine of Magazines into their hands. They tell me that an *ingenious* Poem, called Reflections in a Country Church-Yard, has been communicated to them, which they are printing forthwith; that they are informed that the *excellent* author of it is I by name, and that they beg not only his *indulgence*, but the *honour* of his correspondence, &c. As I am not at all disposed to be either so indulgent, or so correspondent, as they desire, I have but one bad way left to escape the honour they would inflict upon me; and therefore am obliged to desire you would make Doddsley print it immediately (which may be done in less than a week's time) from your copy, but without my name, in what form is most convenient for him, but on his best paper and character; he must correct the press himself, and print it without any interval between the stanzas, because the sense is in some places continued beyond them; and the title must be,——Elegy, written in a Country Church-Yard. If he would add a line or two to say it came into his hands by accident, I should like it better. If you behold the Magazine of Magazines in the light that I do, you will not refuse to give yourself this trouble on my account, which you have taken of your own accord before now. If Doddsley do not do this immediately, he may as well let it alone.

L E T.

## L E T T E R . XVI.

Mr. GRAY to Dr. WHARTON.

*Dec. 19, 1752.*

**H**AVE you read Madame de Maintenon's letters ? They are undoubtedly genuine ; they begin very early in her life, before she married Scarron, and continue after the king's death to within a little while of her own : they bear all the marks of a noble spirit (in her adversity particularly) of virtue and unaffected devotion ; insomuch, that I am almost persuaded she was actually married to Lewis the XIV. and never his Mistress : and this not out of any policy or ambition, but conscience : for she was what we should call a bigot, yet with great good sense : In short, she was too good for a court. Misfortunes in the beginning of her life had formed her mind (naturally lively and impatient) to reflection and a habit of piety. She was always miserable while she had the care of Madame de Montespan's children ; timid and very cautious of making use of that unlimited power she rose to afterwards, for fear of trespassing on the king's friendship for her ; and after his death not at all afraid of meeting her own.

I do not know what to say to you with regard to Racine ; it sounds to me as if any body should fall upon Shakespeare, who indeed lies infinitely more open to criticism of all kinds ; but I should not care to be the person that undertook it. If you do not like Athaliah or Britannicus, there is no more to be said, I have done.



Bishop Hall's satires, called *Virgide miæ*, are lately republished. They are full of spirit and poetry; as much of the first as Dr. Donne, and far more of the latter: they were written at the university when he was about twenty-three years old, and in Queen Elizabeth's time.

You do not say whether you have read the *Crito* \* I only recommend the dramatic part of the *Phædo* to you, not the argumentative. The subject of the *Erastæ* is good; it treats of that peculiar character and turn of mind which belongs to a true philosopher, but it is shorter than one would wish. The *Euthyphro* I would not read at all.

## LETTER XVII.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WALPOLE.

*Stoke, Jan. 1753.*

I Am at present at Stoke, to which place I came at half an hour's warning upon the news I received of my mother's illness, and did not expect to have found her alive; but when I arrived she was much better, and continues so. I shall therefore be very glad to make you a visit at Strawberry-Hill, whenever you give me notice of a convenient time. I am surprized at the print †; which far surpasses my

\* Of Plato.

† A proof print of the *Cul de Lampe* which Mr. Bentley designed for the *Elegy* in a country church-yard, and which represents a village-funeral; this occasioned the pleasant mistake

my idea of London graving: The drawing it was so finished, that I suppose it did not require all the art I had imagined to copy it tolerably. My aunts seeing me open your letter, took it to be a burying-ticket, and asked whether any body had left me a ring; and so they still conceive it to be, even with all their spectacles on. Heaven forbid they should suspect it to belong to any verses of mine, they would burn me for a poet. On my own part I am satisfied, if this design of yours succeed so well as you intend it; and yet I know it will be accompanied with something not at all agreeable to me.— While I write this, I receive your second letter.— Sure, you are not out of your wits! This I know, if you suffer my head to be printed, you will infallibly put me out of mine. I conjure you immediately to put a stop to any such design. Who is at the expence of engraving it, I know not; but if it be Doddsley, I will make up the loss to him. The thing as it was, I know, will make me ridiculous enough; but to appear in proper person, at the head of my works, consisting of half a dozen ballads in thirty pages, would be worse than the pillory. I do assure you, if I had received such a book, with such a front-

take of his two aunts. The remainder of the letter relates entirely to the projected publication of Mr. Bentley's designs, which were printed after by Doddsley this same year. The latter part of it, where he so vehemently declares against having his head prefix to that work, will appear highly characteristic to those readers, who were personally acquainted with Mr. Gray. The print, which was taken from an original picture, painted by Echart, in Mr. Walpole's possession, was actually more than half engraved; but afterwards on this account suppressed.

tispiece, without any warning, I believe it would have given me a palsy : Therefore I rejoice to have received this notice, and shall not be easy till you tell me all thoughts of it are laid aside. I am extremely in earnest, and cannot bear even the idea.

I had written to Dodsley if I had not received yours, to tell him how little I liked the title which he meant to prefix ; but your letter has put all that out of my head. If you think it necessary to print these explanations \* for the use of people that have no eyes, I should be glad they were a little altered. I am, to my shame, in your debt for a long letter ; but I cannot think of any thing else till you have set me at ease on this matter.

---

While Mr. Bentley was employed in making the Designs mentioned in the preceding letter, Mr. Gray, who greatly admired not only the elegance of his fancy, but also the neatness as well as facility of his execution, began a complimentary poem to him, which I shall now insert. Many readers will perhaps think the panegyric carried too far ; as I own I did when he first shewed it me. Yet it is but justice to declare, that the original drawings, now in Mr. Walpole's possession, which I have since seen, are so infinitely superior to the published engravings of them, that a person, who has only seen the latter, can by no means judge of the excellencies of the former : Besides, there is so much of grotesque fancy

\* See the above-mentioned Designs, where the explanations here alluded to are inserted.

in the Designs themselves, that it can be no great matter of wonder (even if the engravers had done justice to them) that they failed to please universally. What I have said in defence of the Long Story might easily be applied to these productions of the sister art : But not to detain the reader from the perusal of a fragment, many stanzas of which are equal in poetical merit to the best in his most finished poems, I shall here only add that it was for the sake of the Design which Mr. Bentley made for the Long Story, that Mr. Gray permitted it to be printed ; yet not without clearly foreseeing that he risked somewhat by the publication of it, as he intimates in the preceding letter : and indeed the event shewed his judgment to be true in this particular, as it proved the least popular of all his productions.

#### STANZAS to Mr. BENTLEY.

**I**N silent gaze the tuneful choir among,  
 Half pleas'd, half blushing let the muse admire,  
 While Bentley leads her sister-art along,  
 And bids the pencil answer to the lyre.  
 See, in their course, each transitory thought  
 Fix'd by his touch a lasting essence take ;  
 Each dream, in fancy's airy colouring wrought,  
 To local Symmetry and life awake !  
 The tardy rhymes that us'd to linger on,  
 To censure cold, and negligent of fame,  
 In swifter measures animated run,  
 And catch a lustre from his genuine flame.



Ah ! could they catch his strength, his easy grace,  
 His quick creation, his unerring line ;  
 The energy of Pope they might efface,  
 And Dryden's harmony submit to mine.  
 But not to one in this benighted age  
 Is that diviner inspiration giv'n,  
 That burns in Shakespeare's or in Milton's page,  
 The pomp and prodigality of heav'n.  
 As when conspiring in the diamond's blaze,  
 The meaner gems, that singly charm the sight,  
 Together dart their intermingled rays,  
 And dazzle with a luxury of light.  
 \* Enough for me, if to some feeling breast  
 My lines a secret sympathy impart ;  
 And as their pleasing influence flows *confest*,  
 A sigh of soft reflection *beave the heart*.

---

In the March following Mr. Gray lost that Mother  
 for whom, on all occasions, we have seen he shewed  
 so tender a regard. She was buried in the same vault  
 where her sister's remains had been deposited more  
 than three years before. As the inscription on the  
 tomb-stone (at least the latter part of it) is undoubt-  
 edly of Mr. Gray's writing, it here would claim a

\* A corner of the only manuscript copy, which Mr. Gray  
 left of this fragment, is unfortunately torn ; and though I have  
 endeavoured to supply the chasm, I am not quite satisfied  
 with the words which I have inserted in the third line. I  
 print my additions in italics, and shall be much pleased if  
 any reader finds a better supplement to this imperfect stanza.

place,

place, even if it had not a peculiar pathos to recommend it, and, at the same time, a true inscriptive simplicity.

IN THE VAULT BENEATH ARE DEPOSITED,  
IN HOPE OF A JOYFUL RESURRECTION,

THE REMAINS OF

MARY ANTROBUS.

SHE DIED, UNMARRIED, NOV. V. MDCCXLIX.

AGED LXVI.

IN THE SAME PIOUS CONFIDENCE,  
BESIDE HER FRIEND AND SISTER,  
HERE SLEEP THE REMAINS OF

DOROTHY GRAY,

WIDOW, THE CAREFUL TENDER MOTHER  
OF MANY CHILDREN, ONE OF WHOM ALONE  
HAD THE MISFORTUNE TO SURVIVE HER.

SHE DIED MARCH XI. MDCCLIII.

AGED LXVII.

## L E T T E R XVIII.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. MASON.

*Durham, Dec. 26, 1753.*

A Little while before I received your melancholy letter, I had been informed by Mr. Charles Avison of one of the sad events you mention \*. I know what it is to lose persons that one's eyes and heart have long been used to ; and I never desire to part with the remembrance of that loss, nor would wish you should. It is something that you had a little time to acquaint yourself with the idea beforehand ; and that your Father suffered but little pain, the only thing that makes death terrible. After I have said this, I cannot help expressing my surprise at the disposition he has made of his affairs. I must (if you will suffer me to say so) call it great weakness ; and yet perhaps your affliction for him is heightened by that very weakness ; for I know it is possible to feel an additional sorrow for the faults of those we have loved, even where that fault has been greatly injurious to ourselves.—Let me desire you not to expose yourself to any further danger in the midst of that scene of sickness and death ; but withdraw as soon as possible to some place at a little distance in the country ; for I do not, in the least, like the situation you are in. I do not attempt to console you on the situation your fortune is

\* The death of my Father, and of Dr. Marmaduke Prickett, a young Physician of my own age, with whom I was brought up from infancy, who died of the same infectious fever.

left in ; if it were far worse, the good opinion I have of you tells me, you will never the sooner do any thing mean or unworthy of yourself ; and consequently I cannot pity you on this account, but I sincerely do on the new loss you have had of a good and friendly man, whose memory I honour. I have seen the scene you describe, and know how dreadful it is : I know too I am the better for it. We are all idle and thoughtless things, and have no sense, no use in the world any longer than that sad impression lasts ; the deeper it is engraved the better.

---

L E T T E R. XIX.

Mr. GRAY to Dr. WHARTON.

*Stoke, Sept. 18, 1754.*

I Am glad you enter into the spirit of Strawberry Castle ; it has a purity and propriety of Gothicism in it (with very few exceptions) that I have not seen elsewhere. My Lord Radnor's vagaries I see did not keep you from doing justice to his situation, which far surpasses every thing near it ; and I do not know a more laughing scene than that about Twickenham and Richmond. Dr. Aken-side, I perceive, is no conjurer in architecture ; especially when he talks of the ruins of Persepolis, which are no more Gothic than they are Chinese. The Egyptian style (see Dr. Pococke, not his discourses but his prints) was apparently the mother of the Greek ; and there is such a similitude between the Egyptian and those Persian ruins, as gave Diodorus room to affirm, that the old buildings of Persia were certainly performed  
by



by Egyptian artists : As to the other part of your friend's opinion, that the Gothic manner is the Saracen or Moorish, he has a great authority to support him, that of Sir Christopher Wren ; and yet I cannot help thinking it undoubtedly wrong. The palaces in Spain I never saw but in description, which gives us little or no idea of things ; but the Doge's palace at Venice I have seen, which is in the Arabesque manner : And the houses of Barbary you may see in Dr. Shaw's book, not to mention abundance of other Eastern buildings in Turkey, Persia, &c. that we have views of ; and they seem plainly to be corruptions of the Greek architecture, broke into little parts indeed, and covered with little ornaments, but in a taste very distinguishable from that which we call Gothic. There is one thing that runs through the Moorish buildings that an imitator would certainly have been first struck with, and would have tried to copy ; and that is the cupolas which cover everything, baths, apartments, and even kitchens ;oyer who ever saw a Gothic cupola ? It is a thing plainly of Greek original. I do not see any thing but the slender spires that serve for steeples, which may perhaps be borrowed from the Saracen minarets on their mosques.

I take it ill you should say any thing against the Mole, it is a reflexion I see cast at the Thames. Do you think that rivers, which have lived in London and its neighbourhood all their days, will run roaring and tumbling about like your tramontane torrents in the North ? No, they only glide and whisper.

## LETTER XX.

Mr. GRAY to Dr. WHARTON.

*Cambridge, March 9, 1755.*

I Do not pretend to humble any one's pride ; I love my own too well to attempt it. As to mortifying their vanity, it is too easy and too mean a task for me to delight in. You are very good in shewing so much sensibility on my account ; but be assured my taste for praise is not like that of children for fruit ; if there were nothing but medlars and blackberries in the world, I could be very well content to go without any at all. I dare say that Mason, though some years younger than I, was as little elevated with the approbation of Lord\* and Lord\*, as I am mortified by their silence.

With regard to publishing, I am not so much against the thing itself as of publishing this Ode alone\*. I have two or three more ideas in my head ; what is to come of them ? Must they too come out in the shape of little sixpenny flams, dropping one after another till Mr. Doddsley thinks fit to collect them with Mr. This's Song, and Mr. Tother's Epigram, into a pretty volume ? I am sure Mason must be sensible of this, and therefore cannot mean what he says ; neither am I quite of your opinion with regard to strophe and antistrophe † ;

setting

\* His Ode on the progress of Poetry.

† He often made the same remark to me in conversation, which led me to form the last Ode of Caractacus in shorter stanzas ;

setting aside the difficulty of execution, methinks it has little or no effect on the ear, which scarce perceives the regular return of metres at so great a distance from one another: to make it succeed, I am persuaded the stanzas must not consist of above nine lines each at the most. Pindar has several such Odes.

---

Mr. Gray intimates, in the foregoing letter, that he had two or three more lyrical ideas in his head: One of these was the BARD, the exordium of which was at this time finished; I say finished, because his conceptions, as well as his manner of disposing them, were so singularly exact, that he had seldom occasion to make many, except verbal emendations, after he had first committed his lines to paper. It

stanzas: But we must not imagine that he thought the regular Pindaric method without its use; though, as he justly says, when formed in long stanzas, it does not fully succeed in point of effect on the ear: For there was nothing which he more disliked than that chain of irregular stanzas which Cowley introduced, and falsely called Pindaric; and which from the extreme facility of execution produced a number of miserable imitators. Had the regular return of Strophe, Antistrophe, and Epode no other merit than that of extreme difficulty, it ought, on this very account, to be valued; because we well know that "Easy writing is no easy reading." It is also to be remarked, that Mr. Congreve, who (though without any lyrical powers) first introduced the regular Pindaric form into the English language, made use of the short stanzas which Mr. Gray here recommends.—See his Ode to the Queen: Works, vol. III, p. 438, Ed. Birm.

was never his method to sketch his general design in careless verse \*, he always finished as he proceeded ; this,

\* I have many of his critical letters by me on my own compositions : Letters, which, though they would not amuse the public in general, contain excellent lessons for young poets, from one of these I extract the following passage, which seems to explain this matter more fully : “ Extreme conciseness of expression, yet pure, perspicuous, and musical, is one of the grand beauties of lyric poetry : This I have always aimed at, and never could attain. The necessity of rhyming is one great obstacle to it : Another, and perhaps a stronger, is that way you have chosen, of casting down your first thoughts carelessly and at large, and then clipping them here and there at leisure. This method, after all possible pains, will leave behind it a laxity, a diffuseness. The frame of a thought (otherwise well-invented, well-turned, and well-placed) is often weakened by it. Do I talk nonsense ? Or do you understand me ? I am persuaded what I say is true in my head, whatever it may be in prose ; for “ I do not pretend to write prose.” Nothing can be more just than this remark : Yet, as I say above, it is a mode of writing which is only calculated for smaller compositions : But Mr. Gray, though he applied it here to an Ode, was apt to think it a general rule. Now if an epic or dramatic poet was to resolve to finish every part of his work as highly as we have seen Mr. Gray laboured his first scene of Agrippina, I am apt to think he would tire of it as soon as he did ; for in the course of so multifarious a work, he would find himself obliged to expunge some of the best written parts, in order to preserve the unity of the whole. I know only one way to prevent this, and that was the method which Racine followed ; who (as his son tells us, in that amusing life, though much zested with bigotry, which he has given us of his father) when he began a drama, disposed every part of it accurately in prose ; and when he had connected all the scenes together, used to say, “ Ma Tragedie est faite.” (See *La vie de Jean Racine*, p. 117. See also his son’s other works, tom. 2d, for a specimen in a first act of the *Iphigenia in Tauris*.)

M. Racine,



this, tho' it made his execution slow, made his compositions more perfect. I think, however, that this method was only calculated to produce such short works as generally employed his poetical pen; and that from pursuing it, he grew tired of his larger designs before he had completed them. The fact seems to justify my opinion. But my principal reason for mentioning this at present, is to explain the cause why I have not been scrupulous in publishing so many of his fragments in the course of these memoirs. It would have been unpardonable in me to have taken this liberty with a deceased friend, had I not found his lines, as far as they went, nearly as high finished as they would have been, when completed: if I am mistaken in this, I hope the reader will rather impute it to a defect in my own Judgement, than a want of respect to Mr. Gray's Memory.

This consideration, however, emboldens me to print the following fragment of an Ode in this place, which was unquestionably another of the ideas, alluded to in the preceding letter: since I find in his memorandum-book, of the preceding year 1734, a sketch of his design as follows: "Contrast between  
 " the winter past and coming spring.—Joy owing to  
 " that vicissitude.—many who never feel that de-  
 " light.—Sloth.—Envy.—Ambition. How much

Mr. Racine, it seems, was an easy versifier in a language in which, they say, it is more difficult than in ours to versify. It certainly is so with regard to dramatic compositions. I am on this account persuaded, that if the great Poet had written in English, he would have drawn out his first sketches, not in prose, but in careless blank-verse; yet this I give as mere matter of opinion.

“ happier

“ happier the rustic who feels it, tho’ he knows not  
 “ how.” I print this careless note, in order that  
 the reader may conceive the intended arrangement  
 of the whole ; who, I doubt not, will, on perus-  
 ing the following beautiful stanzas, lament with me  
 that he left it incomplete ; nor will it console him  
 for the loss, if I tell him that I have had the boldness  
 to attempt to finish it myself, making use of some  
 other lines and broken stanzas which he had written :  
 But as my aim in undertaking this difficult task was  
 merely to elucidate the Poet’s general meaning, I do  
 not think that my additions are worthy to be inserted  
 in this place ; they will find a more fit situation if  
 thrown amongst those notes which I shall put at the  
 end of his Poems.

## O D E.

**N**OW the golden Morn aloft  
 Waves her dew-bespangled wing,  
 With vermil cheek, and whisper soft  
 She wooes the tardy Spring :  
 Till April starts, and calls around  
 The sleeping fragrance from the ground ;  
 And lightly o’er the living scene  
 Scatters his freshest, tenderest green.

New-born flocks, in rustic dance,  
 Frisking ply their feeble feet ;  
 Forgetful of their wintry trance  
 The birds his presence greet :  
 But chief, the Sky-Lark warbles high  
 His trembling thrilling extacy ;

And,

And, lessening from the dazzled sight,  
Melts into air and liquid light.

Yesterday the fullen year  
Saw the snowy whirlwind fly ;  
Mute was the music of the air,  
The herd stood drooping by :  
Their raptures now that wildly flow,  
No yesterday, nor morrow know ;  
'Tis man alone that joy descries  
With forward, and reverted eyes.

Smiles on past Misfortune's brow,  
Soft Reflection's hand can trace ;  
And o'er the cheek of Sorrow throw  
A melancholy grace :  
While Hope prolongs our happier hour ;  
Or deepest shades that dimly lower  
And blacken round our weary way,  
Gilds with a gleam of distant day.

Still, where rosy Pleasure leads,  
See a kindred Grief pursue ;  
Behind the steps that Misery treads  
Approaching Comfort view :  
The hues of bliss more brightly glow,  
Chastis'd by sabler tints of woe ;  
And blended form, with artful strife,  
The strength and harmony of life.

See the Wretch, that long has tost  
On the thorny bed of pain,  
At length repair his vigour lost,  
And breathe, and walk again :

The meanest floweret of the vale,  
 The simplest note that swells the gale,  
 The common sun, the air, the skies,  
 To Him are opening Paradise.

\* \* \* \*

A third of these ideas I find in his common-place book, on the same page with his argument for the BARD\*. I do not believe that he ever even began to compose the Ode itself; but the thought is as follows:

“ All that men of power can do for men of genius  
 “ is to leave them at their liberty, compared to birds  
 “ that, when confined to a cage, do but regret  
 “ the loss of their freedom in melancholy strains,  
 “ and lose the luscious wildness and happy luxu-  
 “ riance of their notes, which used to make the  
 “ woods resound.”

Those who are conversant in the arrangement of a lyrical composition, will easily perceive, from this short argument, that the Ode would have opened with the simile; which, when adorned with those *thoughts that breathe and words that burn*, that Mr. Gray's muse could so richly supply, would have been at once a fine exordium, and at the same time a natural introduction to the truth he meant to impress. This, however, could hardly have been done without some little aid borrowed from satire:

\* I shall insert this, with some remarks upon it, in my additional notes to his Poems.



For however true his proposition may be, that "all that men of power could do for men of genius is to leave them at their liberty;" or, as I should put it, "that their best patronage signifies nothing if it abridges them of that liberty;" yet the fact is, that neither of the parties are convinced of this truth till they have tried the experiment, and find some reason or other (no matter whether good or bad) to think they had better never have tried it. *Monf. d'Alembert*, who has written an excellent essay on this subject, which *Mr. Gray* greatly admired, and which perhaps gave him the first idea of this intended Ode, puts one of the more common of these reasons in so lively a manner, that it may not be amiss here to insert it.

"Parmi les grands Seigneurs les plus affables il en est peu qui se depouillent avec des Gens de lettres de leur grandeur, vraie ou pretendue, jusqu'au point de l'oublier tout-a-fait. C'est ce qu'on apperçoit sur tout dans les conversations, où l'on n'est pas de leur avis. Il semble qu'à mesure que l'Homme d'Esprit s'eclipse, l'Homme de Qualité se montre; et paroisse exiger la deference d'ont l'Homme d'Esprit avoit commence par dispenser. Aussi le commerce intime des Grands avec les Gens de lettres ne finit que trop souvent par quelque rupture eclatante; rupture qui vient presque toujours de l'oubli des regards reciproques auxquelles on a manqué de part ou d'autre, peut etre même des deux côtés."\* However, I

\* *Essai sur la Société des Grands, avec les Gens de Lettres; Melanges de Litterature & Philosophie,* tom. 2d, p. 134

think a man of letters ought to have other reasons besides this for breaking such a connection after it has been once formed.

I have now given the reader the best account in my power of what our Author's unfinished lyrical ideas consisted : I believe they are all that he in any sort committed to paper, and probably those which he immediately alluded to in the preceding letter.

## LETTER XXI.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. STONHEWER.\*

*August 21, 1755.*

I Thank you for your intelligence about *Herculanum*, which was the first news I received of it. I have since turned over Monsignor Baiardi's book †,

\* Now Auditor of Excise. His friendship with Mr. Gray commenced at College, and continued till the death of the latter.

† I believe the book here ridiculed was published by the Authority of the King of Naples. But afterwards, on finding how ill qualified the Author was to execute the task, the business of describing the Antiquities found at *Herculanum* was put into other hands; who have certainly, as far as they have gone, performed it much better.

where

where I have learned how many grains of modern wheat the Roman Congius, in the Capitol, holds, and how many thousandth parts of an inch the Greek foot consisted of more (or less, for I forget which) than our own. He proves also by many affecting examples, that an antiquary may be mistaken: That, for any thing any body knows, this place under ground might be some other place, and not Herculaneum; but nevertheless, that he can shew for certain, that it was this place and no other place; that it is hard to say which of the several Hercules's was the founder; therefore (in the third volume) he promises to give us the memoirs of them all; and after that, if we do not know what to think of the matter, he will tell us. There is a great deal of wit too, and satire and verses, in the book, which is intended chiefly for the information of the French King, who will be greatly edified without doubt.

I am much obliged to you also for Voltaire's performance; it is very unequal, as he is apt to be in all but his dramas, and looks like the work of a man that will admire his retreat and his Lemman-Lake no longer than till he finds an opportunity to leave it\*: However, though there be many parts which I do not like, yet it is in several places excellent, and every where above mediocrity. As you have the

\* I do not recollect the title of this Poem, but it was a small one which M. de Voltaire wrote when he first settled at Ferney. By the long residence he has since made there, it appears either that our Author was mistaken in his conjecture, or that an opportunity of leaving it had not yet happened.

politeness to pretend impatience, and desire I would communicate, and all that, I annex a piece of the Prophecy † ; which must be true at least, as it was wrote so many hundred years after the events.

† The second Antistrophe and Epode, with a few lines of the third Strophe of his Ode, entitled the Bard, were here inserted.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.





OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM

